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# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

## THE MISSING BOX OF BULLION; OR, THE BOY WHO SOLVED A WALL STREET MYSTERY.

*By A SELF MADE MAN.*



As Bender reached for the box of bullion Dick came into the corridor. His unlooked-for appearance rather staggered the rascals. But they were equal to the emergency. "Seize him, Maguire!" cried Savage. Maguire slipped behind Dick and grabbed him.



# Fame and Fortune Weekly

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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# THE MISSING BOX OF BULLION

OR,

## THE BOY WHO SOLVED A WALL STREET MYSTERY

By A SELF-MADE MAN

### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCES OUR HERO.

"This has been a great day for the lambs, Sadie," said Dick Hall, messenger for Broker George Langley, of No. — Wall Street, stopping at the pretty stenographer's table in her den in a corner of the counting-room.

"Has it?" asked Miss Stevens, a chic-looking blonde, stopping in the midst of her work, for she was always ready to exchange a word or two with the office messenger, who was a favorite of hers.

"Bet your life. Stocks have been booming like a house afire since the Exchange opened for business this morning. The lamb who isn't ahead of the game at this time must be one of those unlucky people who never know enough to cop a winner."

"Are you interested in the rise, too?"

"Am I? Say, when I miss a good thing call my attention to the fact, will you?"

"Then you're in on another deal?"

"That's what I am, but you don't want to mention it in tones that'll reach the cashier's ears. Yes, I've got the call on 30 shares of A. & D. I bought it yesterday at 65, put up my \$300 capital like a little man, and now it is up to—what do you think?"

"I couldn't guess."

"Seventy-two—just seven points advance in twenty-four hours."

"You are certainly a fortunate boy."

"If I didn't have some luck in speculation I wouldn't touch the market with a ten-foot pole."

"Do you think your stock will go much higher?"

"I'm banking on it going to 80. Everything points to the continuation of the boom to-morrow, and if nothing happens to prevent, prices are sure to be higher. This is the time for the lambs to make a harvest. A lot of them need it to get square on the slump of three weeks ago."

"I wish—sometimes—I were a boy."

"I don't. You're the sweetest proposition in Wall Street, and I wouldn't have you change for a gold mine," chuckled Dick.

"What a jollier you are!" blushed Sadie. "Go along now and let me finish my work. It's time for you to go home, anyway, isn't it?"

"Pretty near—that is, if nothing turns up to detain me."

"Has Mr. Langley gone?"

"No, he's talking to Broker Risdon in his room. Well, so long."

Dick walked out into the waiting-room in time to meet a Wells Fargo & Co.'s expressman with a heavy box on his shoulder.

"Will you sign for this?" asked the man.

"What is it?"

"A box of bullion."

"Whew! The cashier has been looking for that for the last hour. Better take it in to him and have him sign for it."

Dick opened the brass lattice door for the expressman, and then glanced at the clock.

It wanted only a few minutes of his quitting time, so he walked to the window and looked out.



It was a raw, drizzling, foggy afternoon, and the prospect from the office window was not inviting.

The upper stories of the great skyscrapers were completely lost in the mist.

Lights were burning everywhere, except in the streets, to enable the clerical help of the various offices to pursue their labors.

The sidewalks were lined with passing umbrellas, and the A. D. T. and other messenger boys of their ilk were flitting about in glistening waterproof over-garments.

All that was needed to complete the air of depression that hovered over Wall Street was a falling market; but it happened that the contrary was the case.

Be the weather as bad as it might, it could not interfere with the buoyant spirits of the bulls.

They crowded the cafes, where they laughed, joked, and raised merry Cain generally over the satisfactory state of the market.

"This is a good day for water fowl," muttered Dick. "It ought to be kept on tap for their especial benefit and not allowed to escape up here where it isn't wanted. It's enough to make a homeless man commit suicide. Well, I guess it's time for me to get my umbrella and take a——"

"Dick!" said Mr. Langley, coming to the door of his private room.

"Yes, sir."

"Take this letter to Curtis & Co., Jersey City, and fetch me back an answer."

"Well, if that wouldn't jar you," said the boy, putting the letter in his pocket. "A letter to go to Jersey City just when I was about to go home, and I've got to bring an answer back. That means the boss is going to wait for me, and is likely to keep tab on the time it takes me to do the errand. Gee, what luck!"

Dick put on his hat and went into the washroom for his umbrella.

On his way back he looked into the stenographer's den.

"What do you think, Sadie? I've got to go to Jersey City for the boss and fetch an answer back. This is a fine afternoon to cross the river—I don't think!" he said in a tone that showed he didn't like the errand for a cent.

"You have my sympathy, Dick," laughed the girl.

"Thank you for nothing. How would you like it if you had to go wading around in the slush and inhaling the fog from the river? You wouldn't find it so funny."

"Oh, you're used to it. Haven't you been in and out all day?"

"That was during office hours. This is overtime."

"Mr. Langley will remember it when he raises your wages."

"When he does. Well, I must be off."

A moment later the office door slammed and Dick was off on his errand.

Fifteen minutes later Mr. Langley walked into the counting-room.

"That box of bullion you were expecting has arrived, Mr. Langley," said the cashier. "It's too late to take it around to the safe deposit vaults. Will you put it in your private safe for the night?"

"Yes. Bring it into my room and leave it in front of the safe. I'll lock it up before I go home," replied the broker.

The cashier lifted the box in his arms and carried it into the private room.

A few minutes afterward Mr. Langley returned to his desk.

At that moment three men were standing out in the corridor, conversing together in low tones.

One of them sported a shiny silk hat and looked like a Wall Street broker.

The other two, who were smoothly shaven, wore derby hats and smart business suits.

The three looked prosperous, the gentleman with the tall hat particularly so, for a massive gold chain crossed his vest from pocket to pocket, and was looped up at a button hole, and on one of his fingers was a massive ring of peculiar design.

Five o'clock approached, and the three men still stood and chatted as if time was of no moment to them.

The clerks now began leaving the different offices on that floor, but none of them took any special notice of the three gentlemen.

It wanted five minutes of five when one of the elevators stopped its upward flight within a few yards of them, and Dick Hall got out.

At that moment the gentleman with the silk hat grasped the arm of one of his companions in a way that people often do when engaged in conversation, and Dick's attention was attracted by the flash of the diamond in the ring.

He was a very observing boy, and he saw that the stone formed the flat head of a coiled snake made of black enamel.

He had seen many rings of snake design, but never anything like this one, which was fully three-quarters of an inch in breadth, representing five complete coils, with the head rising in the attitude of a reptile about to strike.

The diamond was about a five-carat one, and shone like a twinkling star.

"That's a mighty fine ring," thought the boy, as he hurried toward his office. "I'll bet it's worth a thousand dollars if it's worth a cent. He's surely a rich guy, for that watch chain across his vest looks like a pretty solid one. It's a fine thing to be wealthy. I wonder if I'll ever be able to sport a ring and chain like those? It won't be my fault if I don't."

As he opened the office door he came face to face with Sadie Stevens on her way out.

"Got back, have you?" she said. "You haven't been so long."

"I've been away over an hour. If you'll wait a minute or two I'll see you to the bridge—that is, if you don't object to my escort."

"Object! Why, I shall be glad to have your company. You can hold my umbrella for me and save me that much trouble."

"We sha'n't need it, for it isn't raining now."

"Isn't it? That's good."

Dick rushed into the inner room and handed the answer he brought back to his boss, who tore the envelope open, read the few words it contained, and nodded his head approvingly.

"Is that all, Mr. Langley?" asked Dick, anxious to be off.

"Yes—no, wait a moment. I want you to help me put that box of bullion into my safe."

"All right, sir," replied the young messenger cheerfully.



The broker opened his safe, they lifted the heavy box, which contained \$20,000 worth of pure golden ingots, and shoved it into the bottom of the safe, and then Mr. Langley slammed the door shut and turned the handle, trying the door to make sure that it was locked.

"That would make a fine haul for a burglar," he remarked; "but those chaps don't often come to Wall Street. It's too risky for them."

"I guess it is, sir. They don't get below the 'dead line.'"

"Help me on with my overcoat, and then you can go," said the broker.

Dick did so, and returned to Sadie, who was waiting for him in the hall.

The rest of the office force had already gone, and Dick and the girl hastened to the elevator.

The three gentlemen were still standing and talking together.

As the young messenger and the stenographer approached two of them burst out laughing as if the other had just said something amusing.

Dick would have called Sadie's attention to the ring on the elder man's finger, only he held that hand behind him at the moment.

However, he told her about it while they were waiting for a descending cage.

They reached the ground floor in a minute or so, and Dick walked up to the Brooklyn Bridge with the fair Sadie and put her aboard a car.

Then he crossed City Hall Park, skipped over Broadway, and walked down Chambers Street to the Sixth Avenue elevated station, where he took an uptown train.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE MISSING BOX OF BULLION.

Dick lived with his father, mother and a younger brother in a Harlem flat.

Mr. Hall was cashier and bookkeeper for one of the branch offices in Harlem of a big packing house, which carried on both a retail and wholesale trade.

He received a very fair salary, and was able to keep his family in comfortable style.

Dick had been working in Wall Street as messenger for Mr. Langley for the best part of three years, and what he thought he didn't know about the financial district, and the methods in vogue there, was hardly worth mentioning.

When he got into the car en route for home he sat down beside a gentleman who was telling his companion about a mysterious robbery that had happened in a broker's office in Chicago, where he had just come from.

"Fifteen thousand dollars in bills, and some silver, was taken from the office safe, and yet the safe showed no indications of having been tampered with," he said.

"Maybe the cashier got away with it," replied his companion.

"The cashier was an old man of undoubted integrity, and the broker had implicit confidence in him."

"It's the people who are trusted the most who generally get away with the goods," laughed his companion.

"In this instance the cashier didn't know the money, barring a very small amount, was in the safe."

"Why didn't he?"

"The \$15,000 was delivered to the broker in an express package after the cashier had gone home. The broker opened the safe and locked it up himself. Next morning the broker came down early, before the cashier arrived, and found the express package missing. The cashier afterward reported the silver change missing, too."

"What did the police say about it?"

"I don't know what they said, but the papers alluded to it as one of the most mysterious robberies that ever happened in Chicago."

"Did the detectives discover any clue to the thief or thieves?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"When did this affair happen?"

"About a month ago."

"Whoever did the trick must have known the combination of the safe."

"It would seem so, but the broker declared that only himself and the cashier were acquainted with that."

"Well, many remarkable things happen in this world at one time or another, and some of them always remain mysteries."

His companion nodded and then they changed the subject.

Dick listened with some interest to the foregoing, for anything of a mysterious nature rather appealed to him.

He was a great admirer of detective stories, and had read every one he could get hold of.

"I'll bet a detective would have discovered who it was who got into that safe," he thought, after the men next to him had dismissed the subject. "He'd have found a clue, if it were only a discarded cigar butt, and out of that would have built up a deductive theory that would have led straight to the thief."

Dick picked up his paper and read till the train reached his station, when he got out and walked home.

At the supper table he told his folks about the mysterious safe robbery in Chicago, and his father and brother hazarded all kinds of guesses as to who it was that committed the crime.

Dick was always at the office five or ten minutes before anybody else reached the place.

He employed his time reading the Wall Street news in one of the financial dailies delivered in the first mail, and in studying the previous day's market report.

It was his ambition to keep abreast of all that was happening in the financial district.

He hoped to become a broker some day, and he let nothing get by him that would count toward that end.

When he reached the office on the morning succeeding his visit to Jersey City, he found, as usual, a batch of letters and papers lying inside the door where the postman had shoved them through the slit in the center panel.

He gathered them up and carried them into the private office, where he deposited them on a sliding shelf of his employer's desk, which he pulled out for the purpose.

A book, containing past records of railroad and other important stocks, lay on top of the safe.



Dick reached for it, as he wanted some information on the subject.

The book eluded his clutch and fell to the rug in front of the safe.

As he stooped to get it he saw something dark and shiny imbedded in the rug, and he picked it up.

Examining the thing, he saw that it was part of the coil, with tail complete, of a black enamel reptile.

It had clearly been roughly broken off from the rest of the ornament, apparently a ring, to which it belonged.

"I wonder who lost that?" thought Dick. "Must have been one of Mr. Langley's friends, or perhaps some visitor who called here yesterday. The loss of it has spoiled the ring or other piece of jewelry which it was a part of. I wonder how it got broken off? Some force must have been used, by the looks of the fracture and considering the tenacious material it was made out of. I'll show it to the boss when he comes, and he may be able to recognize it and place the owner."

Dick put it in his vest pocket.

As he did so, while still on his knees, he saw a whitish substance on the floor under the edge of the safe.

Taking it in his fingers, he found it was a piece of putty.

He was about to toss it into the near-by wastebasket when he saw, clearly indented upon its surface, the flat head and neck of an ornamental snake.

So remarkable a phenomenon naturally attracted his interest and attention, and he went to the light to examine it better.

The snake's head was composed of several facet-like indentations, similar to the small surfaces cut on a diamond, to give the stone its light-reflecting power.

The reptile's head had been forced into the piece of putty, and thus the impression was left in it.

"There is no doubt but this is the head of a snake ring, and the reptile was raised up a bit as if about to spring. How came it to be impressed on this piece of putty? The softness of the putty shows that it was recently done. This is certainly a great curiosity. I must handle it gently if I wish to retain it in its present perfect outline. I'll bet that's the snake that lost its tail which I have in my pocket. I wonder if there are any more remarkable objects around the boss' safe this morning?"

Dick took another look around the rug, but without any expectation of adding to his collection.

There was a yellow stain the size and shape of a silver dollar which he had never noticed before, but that didn't prove that it was of recent occurrence.

Near it was the half-smoked butt of a thick cigar with its band around it.

"Seems to me the janitor's assistant has been careless in sweeping up last night, else this wouldn't be lying here, an object lesson of his negligence. That looks like the remains of a good twenty-five cent cigar. I'll save the label for the young lady in our house who is making a collection of them for decorative purposes."

Dick put the label in his pocket and chucked the butt into the clean cuspidor near Mr. Langley's desk.

Then, with the piece of putty resting carefully in the palm of his hand, he left the room just as two of the clerks came into the office.

Dick was going to show them the snake's head and neck in the putty, but reconsidered the matter.

He was afraid they'd take it up in their fingers and spoil it.

"I must get a box to put this in, and keep it until the putty hardens," he thought. "It is a great curiosity, and I wouldn't like it damaged."

He wondered where and how he would keep it in the meanwhile.

He decided to slip it into an envelope and place it in some place where it was not likely to be disturbed.

He got an envelope and put the tail in with it.

Then he slipped it under the stand that held the copying-press.

There wasn't one chance in a thousand of its being molested there.

At half-past nine he was sent out by the cashier on his first errand.

When he got back he found symptoms of excitement in the office.

Mr. Langley, his cashier, the superintendent of the building, the head janitor, and the chief bookkeeper were in the private office, and were apparently much exercised over something.

The broker looked particularly excited and disturbed, and was talking to the superintendent in a loud tone.

"Gee! I wonder what's up?" thought Dick. "Maybe the boss found a few more cigar butts lying around and is making a kick about it. No, I guess it's something more serious than that. They're looking at the safe as if there was something the matter with it. There can't be anything the matter with it, for I was in here first this morning, and I'll swear it looked all right."

Dick stopped near the indicator and tried to catch what was said in the sanctum of the boss.

"I tell you I'm the only one who has the combination. This safe is only used by me, and it isn't necessary for any one else to open it," Mr. Langley said.

"Well, it's very mysterious, that's all I've got to say," replied the superintendent of the building. "The only thing that's missing, you say, is the box of bullion you put in there yesterday afternoon?"

"That's all, but that's enough in all conscience, for there was \$20,000 worth of golden ingots in it, and I'm responsible for it. If that box of bullion isn't recovered I'll have to make it good in money," said the broker, clearly much worried about the disappearance of the box.

"What time did you leave the office?"

"At five. I was the last to go, though my messenger only preceded me a minute or two."

"The box must have been pretty heavy."

"It was. As much as any man wants to lift. I'll guarantee he wouldn't be able to carry it far without resting frequently."

"I'll make an investigation, for the box couldn't have been taken out of the building without one or more of our employees being aware of the fact, particularly if the attempt was made to get it away after seven o'clock, when the doors are closed and the watchman in charge. He wouldn't permit anything to be taken away unless he knew the person who had it in his possession. All that, however, does not



explain how the box got out of your safe, which you found, you assert, in the same condition you left it in."

"My gracious!" breathed Dick. "Can it be possible that the box of bullion I helped the boss put in his safe just before I went home has been stolen?"

Such proved to be not only the fact, but the box had actually disappeared without the slightest evidence that the safe had been tampered with.

### CHAPTER III.

#### DICK MAKES A HAUL IN THE MARKET.

The superintendent's investigation was pretty thorough, for the case was serious, but it led to no other results than a positive declaration by every employee on duty between 5 P. M. and 9 A. M. that no such box as the one described had been taken from the building.

In the meantime Mr. Langley communicated with the Wall Street detective agency, and one of the smartest sleuths of that office called on the broker.

The facts were communicated to him, and then he carefully examined the safe.

"You are sure that you locked the safe yesterday afternoon just before you left the office?" said the detective.

"I am positive, for I tried the lock to make certain of it," replied the broker.

"And you found it locked this morning?"

"I did."

"Well, there are no signs that it has been tampered with, Mr. Langley. Whoever opened this safe and took the box of bullion used the combination."

"How could they? I am the only one who knows the combination."

"Have you got it written down somewhere in case of—"

"No, sir, I have not."

"You never told your cashier what the combination is?"

"No, sir."

"How did the box of bullion reach your office, and when?"

"By Wells Fargo & Co.'s express, about four o'clock yesterday afternoon, too late for me to send it to my safe deposit vault."

"Then you don't usually keep large amounts of money or other valuables over night in your office?"

"I do not."

"All your employees were aware, I suppose, that the box in question would remain in your office over night locked in your safe?"

"I believe so. At any rate my cashier did, and so did my messenger."

"How long has your cashier been with you?"

"Six or seven years."

"Perfectly trustworthy, I presume?"

"I regard him as such."

"And your messenger? How long has he been in your employ?"

"About three years."

"What sort of boy is he? Good parentage and all that?"

"He is an exceptionally good boy—one of the brightest and most reliable in Wall Street."

The detective then asked about the clerks, and learned, as he expected, that they were of the usual run of brokers' clerks.

He examined the doors leading into the waiting-room and the private office from the corridor, and saw nothing to indicate that a jimmy or any other implement had been used on them.

"How much did the box weigh?"

The broker told him as near as he could guess.

"How about the big safe in your counting-room? Anything missing from it?"

"Nothing."

"The box of bullion was the only thing stolen, then?"

"The only thing."

"Well, I'll have to interview the night watchman, and such other employees of the building as were on duty during the time that intervened since you left your office yesterday afternoon, and the time it was opened this morning," said the detective.

He did and learned nothing that threw any light on the subject.

Finally he went away to report to his chief and confer with him.

The theft struck him as possessing many unusual features and was, on the whole, rather mysterious.

Although the superintendent of the building assured him that the box could not have been taken from the place without some one noticing who had it in hands, and if it was a stranger he couldn't possibly have passed out with it, the detective was not convinced of the fact.

Still he admitted that everything seemed to indicate that the missing box of bullion was still in the building.

Notwithstanding Mr. Langley's statements, he was satisfied that somebody, who he figured was connected with the office, knew the combination of the plundered safe, else it could not have been opened without having been tampered with.

The problem before the sleuth was to find out that somebody, and he set to work to do it, aided by suggestions from his chief.

Dick had little time to dwell upon the theft that day up to three o'clock as the booming market brought a rush of business to the office, and he was kept on the jump right along.

Still he thought about it at intervals, just as he thought about his stock deal, but it seemed to be a most mysterious affair.

It put him in mind of the Chicago safe robbery, and the coincidence of the two cases struck him as remarkable.

"I suppose I ought to tell the boss about what I found near the safe this morning, and turn the articles over to him. They might furnish a clue to the thief. They certainly would in the hands of Sherlock Holmes. All he would have to do would be to take one glance at them, and he'd not only be able to describe the man's personal appearance, but his characteristics, and even show how he obtained the combination of the safe, for that seems to be the only way it was opened."

Dick was returning to the office from the Exchange while he was figuring out the matter, fully satisfied that it was



his duty to turn his discoveries over to Mr. Langley with a full explanation of how they came into his hands.

He was sorry that the necessities of the case required him to give up the piece of putty with its curious imprint, for he wanted to keep it as a curiosity, but he didn't see how he could retain it under the circumstances.

As he was going in at the entrance of the building he came face to face with the gentleman of the silk hat whom he had seen talking in the corridor with two companions the afternoon previous.

He was the man who sported the unique and valuable snake ring which had caught his attention.

Somehow or another Dick had forgotten all about that ring.

The impression of a similar snake's head in the putty, and the broken tail of black enamel had not even connected the two in his mind.

But the moment he recognized the gentleman everything flashed across his mind in a twinkling.

Still there did not seem any likelihood that a fine-looking, apparently wealthy person like this gentleman could possibly have any connection with the missing box of bullion.

It was almost ridiculous to assume such an idea.

Nevertheless Dick's eyes wandered to the gentleman's finger on which he had seen the ring flash.

He wanted to make sure that that particular ring was whole and complete—that the snake had not lost its tail.

He was not very successful.

All he could see was that the ring was on the man's little finger, but from the hurried glance he caught of it he was unable to say whether it was all there or not.

"I must find out somehow," he thought. "I'll follow him a bit and see if I have any better luck."

He was about to do it when he saw Mr. Langley approaching.

He hesitated as to whether he should dodge his employer or not.

His indecision resulted in him losing sight of the gentleman with the ring, and so he entered the building and went straight to the office.

While waiting to be sent out on his next errand he decided to hold on to the piece of putty and the snake's tail for a while longer.

"I'm going to try a little detective work of my own before giving them up," he said to himself. "Who knows but I might clear up the mystery of the missing box of bullion myself. That would get my name in the papers, and be quite a feather in my cap. Time enough for me to give up those articles when I have satisfied myself that the gentleman's ring is perfect."

Having reached that conclusion he began to think about his stock deal.

When he was at the Exchange A. & D. was quoted at 75, just ten points above what he had bought it for, and he wondered if he hadn't better sell out and take the \$300 profit that was in sight.

He got up and looked at the tape which was rolling out of the glass cap of the ticker.

The latest sale of A. & D. was given at 75 3-8.

The whole market was steadily advancing, and he hated to get out too soon, though his Wall Street experience told

him that it was the part of wisdom to get out too soon rather than to wait till it was too late.

He decided to take the risk and hold on a while longer.

A. & D. closed that day at 77.

Next morning it opened at 77 1-2, and by noon was going at a fraction over 80.

Dick was at the Exchange when he saw that figure go up on the blackboard.

It struck him that A. & D. and several other stocks looked topheavy.

"Now is the time for me to cash in," he thought.

So, instead of returning to the office direct, he went up to the little bank on Nassau Street where he made his deal and ordered his shares sold.

The bank's representative at the Exchange disposed of his 30 shares right off, and the young messenger made a profit of \$15 a share, or \$450 altogether, which made him worth \$750.

#### CHAPTER IV.

DICK TELLS SADIE HOW HE EXPECTS TO GET A LINE ON THE MISSING BOX OF BULLION.

In the meantime the newspapers had published the story of the mysterious disappearance of the box of bullion worth \$20,000 from Broker Langley's office, and a couple of headquarters' detectives had been called in to help out the Wall Street agency sleuth.

It was on the day after the box of bullion was found to be missing that Dick sold out his stock.

He took the first chance of telling his friend the stenographer of his success.

"I have made just about \$450 on that little deal," he told her. "That is doing mighty well, considering I only had 30 shares."

"I should think so," admitted Sadie.

"Just think of collaring a year's wages in three or four days."

"I wish I could do that," said the girl.

"I'll bet you do. You'd be able to treat yourself to an unlimited number of new gowns and hats to match.

"Do you imagine I'd spend it all on dress? I'm not quite so extravagant as that."

"Fine feathers make fine birds, and you're a bird for fair," laughed Dick.

"And you're a great tease," replied the stenographer. "But, tell me, has Mr. Langley heard anything about his missing box of bullion?"

"Not a whisper."

"Isn't it strange how that box got out of his private safe?"

"It certainly is."

"There's no way of opening a safe without the combination unless it's broken open, is there?"

"Not that I ever heard of."

"Then it stands to reason that whoever stole the box had the combination."

"It would appear so; but Mr. Langley has declared that he is the only person who knew the combination. How, then, could a stranger get hold of it?"



"I'm sure I never could guess."

"There are three detectives on the case. If they're any good at all I should think they ought to be able to get a line on the thief of thieves. I don't know but I could do better myself with half a chance."

"What—you, Dick?" laughed Sadie. "What put that idea into your head?"

"A detective I read about."

"Oh! Then he was only an imaginary person?"

"That's all, but what he couldn't do in the way of spotting criminals isn't worth talking about."

"What good did that do if what he did was all imaginary?"

"Suppose that the reading of his methods has put ideas into the heads of real detectives, that would do some good, wouldn't it?"

"I suppose so."

"And suppose that his adventures suggested to me a plan of getting on to the missing box of bullion, that would do some good, too, eh?"

"It would indeed. Have you an idea, Dick?" she asked eagerly.

"I have."

"What is it?"

"Great heads like mine never let out their secrets to little heads like yours, Sadie," chuckled the young messenger.

"Well, if you aren't complimentary! I've a great mind never to speak to you again," replied the girl, pretending to be offended.

"You couldn't possibly do that. The temptation to keep that little tongue of yours wagging when I'm around wouldn't let you keep silent."

"You don't know what I could do."

"I know you couldn't keep a secret."

"Why, the idea! I've kept lots of them."

"Name one, for instance."

"I haven't said a word about your stock speculations."

"Right, Sadie. I'll take it all back, and to prove that you have a place in my confidence I'm going to show you something important—something I think has a bearing on the missing box of bullion."

"Aren't you good! I dearly love mysteries, and I just dote on seeing them unraveled."

"Curb your impatience for a second till I return," said Dick.

He left her den, but returned in a few minutes with the envelope in which he had placed the piece of putty and the enameled tail of the snake ring.

"Now," said Dick, "promise that you will be as mute as a mopstick about what I'm going to tell and show you."

"I swear it!" replied Sadie, with mock solemnity, laying her right hand on the top of her machine.

"Very good. If you break your oath your typewriter will surely go back on you, and you will get into all kinds of trouble."

Dick opened the envelope and gently drew forth the piece of putty, which had hardened somewhat.

"You may look, but you mustn't touch. Put your hands behind your back. That's right. Now gaze on that putty and tell me what you see."

"Oh! Isn't that funny! A snake's head and neck. What is that stuff?"

"Putty. It must be handled with care to preserve the impression."

"Did you make that?"

"Me! I'm not the fortunate possessor of a diamond the size of that print. See how plainly the facets are marked around the flat top of the snake's head."

"I see. Well, where did you get it?"

"I found that under the edge of Mr. Langley's safe yesterday morning."

"You did?"

"Yes. And I found this black enamel snake's tail lying on the rug in front of the safe at the same time. From those two pieces of evidence it is a simple matter to deduce the fact that the tail belonged to a black enameled snake ring and that the impression in the putty gives an exact representation of the head and neck of the snake with the diamond imbedded in the former."

"That seems plain enough."

"Of course it is. The diamond being a large one, of great beauty——"

"How do you know that?" interrupted Sadie.

"Never mind how I know it. That is one of the advantages of having a big head. The diamond being a large and fine one indicates that only a man something above the common could afford such an expensive ornament."

"Well?"

"Well, as I found these things in front of the safe that was robbed just after the box of bullion was found to be missing, the inference is that——"

"The man who owns the ring committed the theft," said Sadie.

"Of course; but don't steal my ideas, please. Now, in order to get a line on the missing box of bullion, all I have to do is to find the man with a ring answering to the description furnished by these two articles, the tail of which is broken off."

"Yes; but how do you expect to find him?"

"You leave me to do that, Sadie. He's a tall, well-built gentleman, with a handsome face, dresses like a nabob, and wears a heavy watch chain across his vest."

"Why, how do you know all that? You didn't see him rob the safe."

"I'm a born detective, Sadie, that's how I know it," chuckled Dick. "I also know the brand of cigars he smokes—Henry Clay perfectos, three for a dollar."

"Now you're joking."

"No, I'm not. Here is the wrapper of that kind of cigar. I picked it up attached to a half-smoked perfecto near the safe at the same time I found the other articles."

"Haven't you said anything to Mr. Langley about your discoveries?"

"Not a word."

"Don't you think you ought to?"

"And spoil the reputation as a thief-catcher I expect to make?"

"And you really believe you will discover who took the missing box of bullion?"

"If I don't I shall be greatly disappointed. I think I have a better chance of doing it than the detectives."

"If you should solve the mystery of its disappearance the newspapers will call you the smartest boy in Wall Street."

"The boss calls me that already," laughed Dick. "Now



remember, mum is the word. Don't breathe a whisper of what I have told you," he added, putting the putty and the snake's tail back into the envelope.

"I'll be as silent as the Sphinx," replied Sadie demurely.

"That's right, and I'll let you into any new developments that may occur."

Thus speaking, Dick walked away.

## CHAPTER V.

### DICK MAKES A DISCOVERY OR TWO.

"Dick," said Mr. Langley that afternoon about three o'clock, "I want you to do an errand for me on your way home."

"All right, sir."

"Take this note to the repair counter of Tiffany's. I left a ring there to be fixed. It is probably done by this time. Take it up to my house and leave it there."

"Yes, sir."

"You may go now and attend to it."

Accordingly Dick left the office and connected with a Broadway surface car, and in due time he landed at Tiffany's.

Entering the store he inquired his way to the repair department, and handed the note to one of the men behind the counter.

The clerk read the note and went off to attend to it.

At that moment a well-dressed man with a smoothly shaven face and wearing a derby hat came up to the counter.

Another clerk stepped up to wait on him.

"I should like to have this ring repaired," he said. "It's an expensive one, as you can see. The tail of the snake is broken off, and I want a new one put on that will perfectly match the rest of the ring."

Dick was looking at some rings that were displayed in the showcase, and paid no attention to the newcomer until he heard his words: "The tail of the snake is broken off."

At that he looked up quickly and saw the newcomer hand the clerk a black enamel snake ring with a big diamond embedded in its head.

He saw that the tail of the snake was missing.

His heart gave a big bound.

This must be the ring of which he possessed the missing tail and the impression of the head and neck of the snake.

It would be too much of a coincidence to expect that there were two rings of identically the same pattern, each of which had lost its tail about the same time.

He glanced narrowly at the man and recognized him as one of the men he had seen talking with the big gentleman who wore the ring in the corridor near Mr. Langley's office on the afternoon the missing box of bullion was locked up in the broker's safe.

The boy's heart beat still quicker as he identified the man.

"The gentleman who owns that ring has sent it by this man to be repaired," thought Dick. "Now, if I can only learn his name and address."

"We can do it," replied the clerk.

"How much will it cost?"

The clerk turned the ring over and over, affording Dick an excellent view of it, while he figured on the price.

Finally he mentioned a sum.

"All right," said the man. "When shall I call for it?"

The clerk stated a date, and then asked the customer his name and address.

Dick listened eagerly for his answer.

"Murphy Maguire, Rushmore Hotel."

Just then the clerk who was waiting on Dick came up with a small package which he handed to him.

"Please sign your name to this blank, young man," he said.

Dick placed his autograph on the line intended for it and put the package in his pocket.

By that time the man who had given his name as Murphy Maguire had taken a ticket describing the ring made out by the clerk who attended to him, and was walking out of the store.

Dick followed him out and up the street as far as Eighth Street.

Then permitting him to go on his way, the young messenger started down the side street to connect with an elevated train at the station on Sixth Avenue.

"Murphy Maguire, Rushmore Hotel," muttered the boy as he walked along. "I won't forget that. He's one of the three I saw in the corridor two nights ago. He must be a swell guy, too, if he lives at the Rushmore. Maybe that isn't his own name and address he gave, but that of the big man in the silk dicer who owns the ring. He looked prosperous enough to live at the Rushmore, or the Waldorf-Astoria, for that matter. It doesn't seem reasonable to connect such a gentleman with the missing box of bullion, but you never can tell. He may be a new Raffles. At any rate, it appears now beyond a doubt that it is his ring which is figuring in the mystery, and I shall make it my business to give him all the attention I can spare."

Next morning when Dick left his office on his first errand he saw the big man with the silk hat step out of one of the elevators.

As the gentleman passed him Dick looked at the little finger of his left hand.

He had a ring on it, but it was not the snake ring.

Dick watched to see where he was going.

He entered one of the offices on that floor.

The boy waited until he entered and then walked down the corridor and looked at the name on the door.

"The National Pneumatic Tire Company," he read.

"This is the third time I've met him either in the building or coming from it inside of three days," thought Dick. "Is that his office, or is he merely a visitor? I'll have to find out the name of the person who rented the office for the tire company."

When he returned from his errand he asked the uniformed man in the corridor if he knew the gentleman who represented the National Pneumatic Tire Company on the fourth floor.

"He's a tall, fine-looking man with a silk hat," added Dick.

"I don't know his name, but I know he's one of our new tenants," was the reply.

"How long has he been in the building?"

"About a week or so."

Dick made no more inquiries then, but took an elevator up.



About noon he saw the agent of the building on the street and stopped him.

"Who is the new tenant on our floor who represents the National Pneumatic Tire Company?" he asked.

"His name is Andrew Savage," replied the agent.

"Thank you," replied Dick, and passed on.

"If the gentleman in the silk hat is really Andrew Savage, then I may conclude that the man who left the snake ring at Tiffany's to be repaired gave his real name and address. That being so, I've got two of the trio spotted."

That afternoon Dick accidentally learned that a syndicate had been formed to corner L. & M. stock, and having satisfied himself that his tip was a good one he went to the little bank, put up \$700 of his capital and ordered 70 shares of the road bought for his account at 82.

Later on, while helping Mr. Langley on with his coat, he asked him if there was anything new with reference to the missing box of bullion.

"Nothing," replied the broker. "I don't know what the detectives are doing, as I have had only one report from the detective agency, and that merely reported progress. If any headway has been made toward solving the mystery of the disappearance of the box I haven't heard anything about it."

"It is a very singular affair, isn't it, sir?"

"Most singular."

"I suppose you heard about a similar case that happened in Chicago about a month ago?"

"No, I did not. What was the case?"

Dick told him the story he had overheard in the Sixth Avenue elevated car on the afternoon the box of bullion was put in the safe.

"The two mysterious safe robberies are astonishingly alike," replied the broker. "One would think that the same brains engineered both."

"Yes, sir. Looks kind of that way," replied Dick.

"Leaving aside the remarkable feature of that box getting out of my safe in the way it did, I cannot understand how it could have been taken from the building unless the thief had a confederate in one of the employees. I believe the detectives are working on that supposition."

"Maybe it is still in the building."

"The detectives have searched the building, barring, of course, the offices of the tenants, and have found no sign of it."

"Maybe it will be found yet, sir," replied Dick, wondering if the office of the National Pneumatic Tire Company was searched whether it would lead to results.

"I hope so," replied the broker, wishing him good-night and walking out of the office.

That afternoon Dick didn't go home when he got off, but walked down to the Battery and thence up South Street in a lazy way.

His purpose was to kill time, for he had an object in view.

He returned to the building a little after five and hung around the corridor near the elevator, whence he had a view of the office of the tire company.

About six o'clock the janitor's assistant appeared in that corridor.

At half-past six he unlocked the door of the tire company's offices and entered.

That was what Dick was waiting for.

He walked in after him.

The janitor's assistant knew him by sight as Langley's messenger, and asked him what he was doing around there at that hour.

"Oh, waiting for my boss to turn up," said Dick carelessly, at the same time looking sharply around the room. "This isn't a bad office. Is this a suite?" he added, looking at a closed door.

"Yes. That door leads into the private office."

"So! I'll just glance in," said the boy.

He did, and saw that it was furnished with a desk, a good-sized safe, and other furniture.

"I wonder if the missing box of bullion is in that safe?" he asked himself.

It was a question he could find no answer to, of course.

Having made a minute survey of the room, he shut the door, and after passing a few unimportant remarks with the man he walked out, took an elevator down and went home.

## CHAPTER VI.

### ANOTHER DISCOVERY.

Sadie Stevens had an ardent admirer in the person of Paul Bender, the chief clerk of the office, who expected to fill the shoes of the cashier if that gentleman's position became vacant from any cause.

Bender showed his liking for the fair stenographer in many ways, bringing her flowers frequently and sometimes candy.

These presents were invariably returned to him by the girl, who didn't like the chief clerk for a cent, and tried as politely as she could to let him understand that his attentions were not agreeable to her.

Bender, however, did not lack assurance, and he wouldn't take the hint.

On the morning following Dick's inspection of the office of the National Pneumatic Tire Company, he reached the office before Sadie arrived and laid a big bunch of violets on her table.

Dick, who had finished reading the market report of the previous day's transactions, followed the stenographer to her den to have a few minutes' conversation with her before she settled down to work.

The moment she saw the violets on her desk she snatched them up, and, handing them to Dick, said:

"Put those on Mr. Bender's desk. I do wish he'd stop bringing them to me. I don't want his flowers, or anything else from him in the shape of a present. If he had any sense he would understand that I won't accept his offerings."

"All right, Sadie. I'll do as you say, but I guess he'll be mad."

"Well, I can't help it if he is mad. Let him get glad again," she replied as she hung her things in her closet.

So Dick carried the violets over to the chief clerk's desk.

"Miss Stevens told me to hand these back to you, Mr. Bender," said the young messenger, laying the flowers down.

Bender, who was a smooth-faced young man of twenty-



two, glared at Dick, but made no remark, and the boy returned to the stenographer's den.

A few minutes afterward the chief clerk came to Miss Stevens with a bunch of work in his hand for her to copy.

"What are you doing here, Hall?" he growled, favoring the messenger with an unpleasant look. "Get back on your own dunghill and stay there till you're wanted."

"I'll get back when I get ready," replied Dick independently. "You haven't any authority to order me about."

"Don't address me in that fashion; I won't stand for it," returned Bender, who appeared to have a grouch on owing, probably, to the return of the violets.

"Well, you know what you can do," answered Dick.

"I shall report your impudent conduct to Mr. Langley."

"Go on and report it. If Miss Stevens were to report the persistency with which you annoy her with your attentions, which she has no use for, you'd get a calling down for it," said Dick.

"Will you get out of here, or will I have to kick you out?" roared Bender.

"Seeing that you have business with Miss Stevens I'll go, but it wouldn't be healthy for you to attempt to kick me out," retorted the boy.

"No?" sneered the chief clerk. "Perhaps you think I couldn't do it?"

"I wouldn't advise you to attempt it. Don't imagine that you can ride roughshod over me because you're the chief clerk."

"Dick," said Sadie, "I think you'd better go outside. Mr. Bender, I'm ready to give you my attention."

"Some day that chap and I will have a big scrap," muttered Dick, as he walked away; "and if I don't knock the daylights out of him it will be because he's a better man than I take him for. I'm going to make him quit bothering Sadie or there'll be something doing."

The market had taken a set-back the day before, and lambs with bullish tendencies signified their disapproval by remaining away from the Street, consequently business in the brokers' offices was somewhat quiet.

When ten o'clock came there were only a few customers in Mr. Langley's office, and the prospects were that it would be a slack day.

Mr. Langley came in late that morning, and the first thing he did was to scribble off a note to a big operator, with whom he had dealings, and send Dick out to deliver it.

On his return he saw Mr. Savage and the party whom he recognized as Murphy Maguire, of the Rushmore Hotel, entering an elevator together.

They went up to the fourth floor and entered the office of the National Pneumatic Tire Company.

During the next three or four days Dick kept a sharp eye on the tire company's office, but his vigilance was not rewarded to any great extent.

He saw the gentleman with the silk hat several times, and Maguire but once.

There was nothing the least suspicious about their actions, and Dick began to wonder if, after all, his newly aroused detective instinct was not leading him on a wild-goose chase.

But when he thought of the black enameled ring his purpose of carrying out his plans was fortified anew.

That piece of putty and the tail of the snake ring were too significant reminders that their owner must have had some connection with the disappearance of the box of bullion, and the boy was determined to ferret the matter out, even if it took him an indefinite time to do it.

He was satisfied in his own mind that the box was in the building, even if its contents had been rifled, and he believed it was hidden in the office safe of the tire company.

He had an idea that the golden ingots were still in the box, as it would be a risky matter for the thief to try and dispose of them for the present, since every establishment of any importance that did business in such stuff had been notified to be on the lookout for the stolen gold.

Saturday evening Dick and a friend came down to see a show at the Bijou Theater on Broadway.

Dick treated to the tickets, and after the play his friend, to even up things, suggested an oyster supper.

They went into a Broadway restaurant near by and sat down at a table.

Soon after they commenced their meal three persons entered the restaurant.

Dick happened to look up at the moment, and he was surprised to recognize the trio as Andrew Savage, Murphy Maguire and Paul Bender.

He was particularly astonished to see the latter in company with Savage and Maguire, and apparently on terms of intimacy with them.

The chief clerk, who was dressed much better than he appeared at the office, did not notice Dick, and the young messenger was very glad he didn't.

The three took the only unoccupied table, which was right back of Dick.

The boy heard them order a good supper from the bill of fare, and then they began to talk and laugh together in a jovial way.

They were evidently bent on making a night of it, for they arranged to go to a certain billiard saloon after they finished their meal.

Dick listened as well as he could to what they said, but he heard nothing of any importance.

However, he believed he had found out something that might lead to results, and that was the acquaintance that existed between Paul Bender and the two men he now suspected more than ever to be connected with the mysterious theft of the box of bullion.

Dick and his friend finished their oyster supper and walked out of the restaurant.

"Did you notice the three men who came in after us and took the table behind where I sat?" asked Dick.

"Yes. Pretty tony chaps."

"Well, one of the three is chief clerk in the office where I work."

"You don't say! Which one?"

"The youngest-looking. The one with the violet boutonniere."

"He's quite a dude."

"He's mashed on our stenographer."

"And is she——"

"Mashed on him? Not a bit of it. She doesn't like him worth sour apples. He's been making her little presents of flowers and candy, but she sends them back to him, which ought to be a strong hint that they are unwelcome. He's



one of those persistent chaps who won't take 'No' for an answer, but one of these days he's liable to get a rude jolt that will bring him to his senses."

Had Dick been alone he would have waited around for the three men to come out of the restaurant, and then have followed them to the billiard saloon on the chance of learning something from their talk.

Under the circumstances he had to give that idea up, as he didn't want his friend to know that he was spying on the men.

So the boys took an elevated train at Thirty-third Street station and went home.

The fact that Paul Bender appeared to be so thick with Savage and Maguire struck Dick as a singular circumstance, though if he had been asked to give any good reason why he thought it singular he could not have done so.

He began to suspect the chief clerk as a factor in the missing box of bullion, and believed he would bear watching.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE MAN WHO WAS LOOKING FOR ANDREW SAVAGE.

On the following Monday L. & M. took a sudden bound of three points upward, and the bull traders at the Exchange, taking notice of the fact, helped the good work along by buying it freely.

The result was it went up three points more during the session and closed at 88, which put Dick \$400 ahead on the deal.

Next day the trading in it continued lively, and it advanced to 90 by twelve o'clock.

The entire market took an upward move at the same time, and outside speculators began making their appearance in the Street in growing numbers.

Between his office duties and the interest he had in his speculation, Dick had little time to think about the missing box of bullion.

Still, he did not forget it altogether.

Since he had learned that Paul Bender was chummy with Savage and Maguire he became more sanguine of getting on to a clue that might enable him to solve the mystery.

He realized that he had a difficult proposition to grapple with, but that fact added zest to his efforts.

Mr. Langley, finding that the detectives were making little apparent progress toward the recovery of the box, offered a reward of \$2,500 to stimulate them.

This he subsequently raised to \$5,000, and had it announced in the newspapers.

On Wednesday morning business was booming in great shape at the Exchange when Dick carried a message there to Mr. Langley about half-past eleven.

While waiting at the rail for a chance to deliver it, he noticed a sudden rush of traders toward the L. & M. standard.

The meaning of this was soon apparent.

A well-known broker had come on the floor and was bidding for the stock at rising figures.

Many traders who had purchased the stock the day before

at prices ranging from 86 to 90, hastened to sell out at 92 and over.

The trader, having gathered in quite a bunch of stock, gave way to a second broker, who continued the bidding.

Dick became quite excited as he saw the price rapidly advancing to par.

It was up to 95 when he left the Exchange after delivering his note.

It was recorded at 96 on the tape when he got back to the office.

He was only in the office five minutes when the cashier sent him out again, this time to the office of a broker on Exchange Place.

The broker not being in, he left his note with the cashier.

There was no answer, so he started back.

Reaching the sidewalk, he saw a crowd gathering about a man who was gripped by the arm by a well-dressed, pompous-looking gentleman whom Dick recognized as a prominent broker.

As Dick joined the crowd he thought he saw the prisoner pass something to a man behind him, who immediately detached himself from the crowd and began to saunter up Exchange Place with his hands in his pockets.

He stopped at the corner of New Street and looked back, then disappeared up that narrow thoroughfare.

Dick had taken a good look at him, and felt that he would know him again.

The young messenger soon learned that the broker accused the prisoner of pinching his wallet, containing a considerable sum of money.

"I didn't take your pocketbook!" protested the prisoner in a tone of virtuous indignation.

"Search him!" suggested somebody in the crowd.

"Hold him, gentlemen, and I'll do it," said the broker.

The prisoner offered no objection, and the broker examined all his pockets, without result.

"You see," the prisoner said triumphantly, "I haven't got your property."

"I see you haven't, but I'm sure you took it."

"If I had taken it you would have found it on me, wouldn't you?"

"Maybe he dropped it when you nabbed him?" suggested a spectator.

"Move back, gentlemen, and let me see if it's on the ground," said the broker.

The crowd fell back and left a space open around the trader and the accused.

There was no sign of the pocketbook anywhere.

At that moment a Wall Street detective came up and asked what was the trouble.

The case was explained to him, and the officer looked hard at the prisoner.

He did not recognize him as a professional criminal, but that did not persuade him that he was not a strange crook who had come to town.

He knew that the New York fraternity would hardly dare venture down into Wall Street, lest arrest follow for being found below the "dead line."

Only crooks who had good reason to believe that their faces were not known to detectives always prowling around the financial district would take the chance.

The fact that the wallet had not been found on the pris-



oner was no assurance in the officer's eyes that the man had not pinched it and passed it to a pal in the crowd, for pick-pockets generally traveled in pairs, especially as the broker was sure the man was guilty.

"If you wish to push the charge against this man I'll take him to the station house," said the detective.

"I'm afraid it would amount to nothing, as he hasn't got the pocketbook in his possession," said the broker.

"I suspect that he passed it over to a confederate," replied the detective.

"There is no evidence to show that he did. I'd give \$1,000 for the return of that wallet, for it contains important papers, much more valuable to me than the money that is in it."

"Look here, my friend," said the officer to the accused, "what is your name, and what business brought you to Wall Street?"

"My name is John Day, and I came down to call on a gentleman who has an office in Wall Street," replied the man coolly. "I walked up to this gentleman, who claims to have been robbed by me, to ask him if he could direct me to the building where Mr. Andrew Savage has his office, somewhere in Wall Street. As I laid my hand on his arm to attract his attention, he suddenly wheeled around, felt in his pocket and then grabbed me. He accused me of stealing his wallet, and I was so astonished that I couldn't say a word till a crowd began to gather. That's the whole story."

"How does this man's explanation jibe with yours, Mr. Bulwer?" asked the officer.

"I was standing in the doorway of that building when I felt a tug at my pocket. I turned quickly and found this man standing within a foot of it. Clapping my hand to my pocket I found my wallet was gone. As there was not another person close enough to have taken it, I seized this man and accused him of the theft. He first made an effort to get away, and finding that I had a firm grasp on him he began to deny that he was guilty. A crowd gathered. I asked somebody to get a policeman. Then somebody suggested that the prisoner be searched to prove whether he was a thief or not. I adopted the suggestion and searched him, without result. Then you came up."

"You are sure you had your wallet in that pocket at the time?"

"I felt it there when I came down in the elevator a few minutes before."

"Did you pass any one between the elevator and the door?"

"Several."

"One of them might have pinched your pocketbook," said the prisoner.

As there was a possibility that the accused might be right, the detective began to waver some.

"Well, my man, you say you came down here to see a man named Andrew Savage, who has an office in Wall Street. Have you the number of the building?"

"I lost it."

"What business is Mr. Savage in?"

"He's agent for the National Pneumatic Tire Company, of Canton, Ohio."

"Does Mr. Savage know you personally?"

"He does."

"When you found you had lost his address why didn't you look in the city directory?"

"I did, but his name isn't in it."

"That's singular, if he's been in Wall Street any time."

"He's only had the agency a short time—not over a month or two."

"Oh! No doubt that accounts for it. Well, you come with me and I will see if I can locate Mr. Savage for you. If he will vouch for you, why, that will let you out of your scrape. I will call at your office later on, Mr. Bulwer," said the detective, who then took the man off with him.

The broker nodded, walked away, and the crowd broke up, most of the spectators believing that the stranger had been held up by mistake.

Dick had been an interested looker on, and had quite forgotten the little bit of by-play he thought he had seen take place between the accused and another man who crowded close up behind him and then suddenly made his way out of the crowd as if the proceedings had no interest for him.

When he heard the man tell the detective that he had come to the neighborhood to see Andrew Savage, he regarded him with fresh interest.

As the officer and the accused walked down Exchange Place toward Broad Street to hunt up Mr. Savage's office, Dick followed, as it was right on his way.

Knowing, as he did, that Savage's office was in the same building, and on the same floor with his own, he stepped up to the detective and said:

"I heard this man say he was looking for Andrew Savage, agent of the National Pneumatic Tire Company, and as that gentleman's office is in the building where I am employed I'll give you the address."

Thereupon he told the name of the building on ahead.

"It's funny that this man who is looking for Mr. Savage should be accused of stealing a wallet from Broker Bulwer's pocket," thought Dick, as he walked up toward Wall Street. "He may be a crook and connected in some way with Savage, who I suspect had a great deal to do with the disappearance of the box of bullion. I could almost swear I saw him pass something to that man who stood behind him in the crowd. As I'm not sure of it, why, I didn't care to mention the circumstance to the detective, since if the man really is innocent I would be doing him an injustice."

Dick had reached his office building by this time, and entering, took an elevator for the fourth floor.

## CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH DICK DISTINGUISHES HIMSELF AND MAKES A CONSIDERABLE ADDITION TO HIS CAPITAL.

Fifteen minutes later Dick was sent out again, this time with a note to a stationer and printer on Nassau Street.

He was feeling uncommonly good over the prospect of making a good haul in L. & M.

Just before he left the office he looked at the tape and saw that the stock was now up to 97.

"It's mounting fast. There seems to be no doubt that it will go several points above par. The question I've got



to decide is at what figure shall I sell? If I sold now I could clear a thousand dollars. That's a big profit. I've a great mind to cash in on my way back to the office. I shall pass the bank. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush, especially in Wall Street, where you never can tell just what may happen from one minute to another. Yes, I guess I'd better sell and make sure of the thousand."

Dick executed his errand and then started back for the little bank.

At the corner of Cedar Street he stopped in a doorway to adjust the lace of one of his shoes.

Just around the corner, out of sight, but within earshot of the boy, two men had come together.

One of them was the man who had been accused by Broker Bulwer of taking his wallet, but whose respectability had been vouched for by Andrew Savage when the detective took him to that gentleman's office.

The other was the man to whom Dick thought he had seen him pass something.

"That was a close call I had," he said, with a laugh. "If you hadn't helped me out at the right moment I'd have been caught with the goods on, and that would have settled my hash. I told the detective that my name was John Day, and that I was looking for Savage. I pretended I had lost his address to account for me being in Exchange Place instead of Wall Street. The old duffer was sure I had pinched his wallet, but there was no evidence against me, so he didn't give me in charge. The detective, however, was suspicious of me until we called on Savage, and Andy assured his giblets that I was thoroughly respectable, so he let me go. That's a good one on the Wall Street sleuth—taking Andy's word for me. If he only knew who Andy really is. Upon my word, it makes me laugh to think how easily Andy fools 'em all with his bold front, gold watch chain, diamond ring, silk dicer, and all that. Why, you'd think he was president of a big bank."

"He's one of the cleverest chaps in the business. He fooled 'em in Chicago to beat the band, and he's doin' it over again here."

"Well, never mind Andy. Did you look into the pocket-book?"

"I did."

"What was in it?"

"Ten \$100 bills and a lot of papers."

"The old duffer values the papers more than the money."

"Did he say so?"

"He did. Said he'd give \$1,000 for their return."

"We must make the money then, Cole."

"How can we?"

"He's sure to advertise for the documents, and we can get somebody to return the wallet with the papers, which are no use to us, and tell him that he found it in the gutter around on New Street."

"That ain't a bad idea. Come down on William Street and we'll divide the bills and figure out who we'll get to return the papers if they're advertised for," said Cole.

The men started down Cedar Street, and Dick, who had listened to every word they said, followed after them.

"Gee! But I've made a big discovery, which only proves I've been on the right scent from the first. Andrew Savage is a big Western crook in disguise, therefore his posing as agent for the National Pneumatic Tire Company is simply

a blind to give him a footing in Wall Street. Of course if he's a crook, Murphy Maguire is one, too. As for Paul Bender, I guess they're using him for a purpose. It is hardly likely he's in with them, for he's got a good job at our office, and it would simply be an act of suicide on his part to jeopardize his future for temporary gain, with every chance of being caught, which would be his ruin. Well, I've an idea I'm getting right on the heels of the box of bullion mystery, and if I succeed in unraveling it I'll bet my boss will get the surprise of his life, and the detectives will have to take their hats off to me. That would please me to death. Then the newspapers would give me a big send-off as an amateur detective. I dare say the editors of one of the Sunday editions would pay me \$100 for the story of the case. Then I'd get the reward that the boss has offered for the return of the box of bullion. That would fix me well finally, bet your life. I would be able to lend my governor money enough to start in business for himself if he wanted to. The prospect is fine, if it isn't too good to be true. However, I must nail these two crooks with that pocketbook somehow. Maybe I'll get \$100 from Broker Bulwer for the return of his papers and the money, too."

Thus Dick ruminated as he followed Cole and his companion down Cedar Street to William, and spotted the saloon they entered.

"Oh, for a cop now to run them in!" muttered Dick, looking around for a policeman, but there wasn't one in sight. "That's the way it is when you want an officer, they're somewhere else. I wish I was big enough to arrest them myself, I'd take a chance on it."

He looked in through the swinging door of the saloon and saw the crooks standing at the bar drinking.

"They're going to divide their plunder there. Of course they'll go into the washroom, or sit down at a back table to do it. I wonder if I could play a march on them somehow. It will take nerve, but I guess I've got plenty of that. If I could snatch that wallet out of the hands of the chap who has it when he brings it out they'd never get it back again. But I reckon there'd be a hot time over the trick, and I'd be sure to lose the satisfaction of getting them pinched. However, it's the pocketbook I want most of all, and I'm going to have a try for it."

Thus speaking, Dick entered the saloon and walked toward the rear where the door of the washroom was.

He slipped inside just as the crooks left the bar and followed.

Dick, as soon as he saw them coming, got out of sight behind one of the light swinging doors of the room and waited.

The two rascals came in and looked around.

Finding the room apparently untenanted, Cole's companion, whose name was Duffy, produced the wallet from his pocket and started to open it.

Dick was within two feet of him at the moment.

Swinging the door suddenly open, it struck Cole in the face and body.

The rascal uttered an imprecation, while Duffy started back in surprise.

Before either recovered Dick snatched the wallet from Duffy's hands and made a dash for the saloon.

The rascals were right on his heels.



"Stop that young thief!" roared Cole. "He's stolen my pocketbook!"

Dick crossed the saloon like a shot, and, the way being clear, he reached the door and passed through before the barkeeper and the dozen-odd customers woke up to the fact that something had happened.

Dashing through the crowd of pedestrians on the sidewalk, Dick ran down William toward Wall Street like an antelope.

Cole and Duffy followed him, taking to the middle of the street, but, for reasons, they did not consider it prudent to shout.

Their purpose was to recover the wallet, if they could, without the intervention of the police.

Dick was fleet of foot than they were, and rapidly out-distanced them in the race.

Half the people turned to look at the runners, but as they didn't understand what was going on, the incident possessed but momentary interest for them.

Dick reached Pine Street and darted up it toward the entrance of his office building.

The crooks followed him until they saw him disappear into the entrance, and then they gave up the pursuit, for they knew they hadn't a chance in a thousand of catching him now.

Besides having lost sight of him, they knew they would not be able to recognize the boy if they saw him again, for they had not caught a view of his features.

All they knew was that he was well dressed, and they naturally believed he was some expert young crook, so deftly had Dick done them up.

As for Dick, he hurried to the elevator and was soon in the office.

"Seems to me you've been a long time on that errand I sent you to the printer's," said the cashier, with a hard look at the boy, who he was sure had loitered on the way. "What have you been doing?"

Dick was about to explain matters, when it occurred to him that he had better not, for Paul Bender was likely to hear what he said, and through him it might reach the ears of Andrew Savage.

Savage would probably learn from Cole and his companion how they had been done out of their prize by a boy, and if he knew Dick, on the same floor with himself, had pulled off the trick, he would put the two crooks on to him, and they were likely to try and get back at him out of revenge.

In any event, he figured that it would interfere with his scheme of probing the mystery of the missing box of bullion if he became an object of interest to Savage and his associates.

The success of his project depended on his remaining an apparently unimportant personage in the drama.

So, in answer to the cashier's question, he replied that he had been engaged on a little private business of his own.

"You have plenty of time after your office hours to attend to your private affairs," answered the cashier tartly. "Remember, you are paid to attend to Mr. Langley's business and not your own."

"Yes, sir; it won't happen again," replied Dick.

"I hope not. Here, take this note to Broker Grayson, in

the Mills Building. If he isn't there but at the Exchange, go there and deliver it. Hurry back."

Dick rushed out and was presently scurrying down Broad Street.

He knew that Broker Bulwer's office was in the Mills Building, so he determined to drop in at his office and return him the stolen wallet with a hasty explanation.

Although he had heard the broker say that he would willingly pay \$1,000 for the return of his papers alone, he did not expect to receive any such sum for fetching back the wallet with both the money and the papers.

He thought he might get \$100, but that was the limit of his expectations.

He found the broker he had been sent to in his office, and handed him the note.

"There is no answer," said the trader, after reading it.

"All right, sir," replied Dick, making a hasty exit.

He then went to Mr. Bulwer's office on the floor below.

That gentleman happened to be in and disengaged.

"Can I see Mr. Bulwer," he asked.

"Who are you from?"

"My business is private and important. Tell him that."

He was admitted to the private room.

"Well, young man, what is the private and important business that brought you here?"

"Your stolen pocketbook."

"Eh? My pocketbook! What do you know about it?" asked the broker in surprise.

"I know a whole lot. I'll introduce myself first. My name is Dick Hall, and I am employed as messenger by Broker Langley, of No. — Wall Street. I was present when you nabbed the man who stole it."

"You mean the man I thought stole it. It was not found on him, and the detective afterward called here and told me that the party had been vouched for as an honest and respectable man by a Mr. Savage who is agent for a pneumatic tire company."

"Nevertheless the man is a crook and stole your wallet," replied Dick. "Let me tell you how I know this to be true, and how I succeeded in recovering your property——"

"Did you recover it?" asked the broker eagerly.

"I did, and there it is. Examine it and see if it is all right."

Mr. Bulwer went through his wallet and declared nothing was missing.

Dick then told his story from start to finish in as few words as possible.

"Upon my word, young man, you are a wonder," said the broker when Dick had finished. "You deserve every cent of the reward I intended to offer for the return of the papers alone, and that is \$1,000."

"I don't look for any such recompense as that, sir. If you want to give me \$100 I'll——"

"Young man, I propose to stick to my offer. Here, take these ten bills, and with them my sincere thanks."

"Really, Mr. Bulwer, this is more than I deserve," protested Dick.

"Not a bit of it. I insist on you accepting the money."

"All right, sir. I am very much obliged to you."

"You are welcome. I shall tell everybody what a smart boy you are."

"Mr. Bulwer, I want you to do me a great favor."



"What is it?"

"I don't want you to tell any one about what I have done for you."

"Why not?"

"The news would surely get all over the Street, and my name would get into the papers. Now, I'd rather you'd keep the \$1,000 and not say anything about the matter than give me the money and then spread the news."

"You are a modest lad, I must say. Well, I promise you I won't say a word about the wallet in any way. I will simply let the thing drop. I've got the papers, and that's all I care about."

"Thank you, sir. I will now say good-by."

"Good-by, Hall. Come in and see me some time. I'll be glad to have you call any time."

Dick said he would, and then took his departure.

When he reached the office he saw by the ticker that L. & M. was going at 103 7-8.

"I wish I could get to the bank and sell out my 70 shares," he said to himself. "I see \$1,500 in sight, and that's more than I expected to make. If a slump should come on before I cash in I might lose every cent of it."

At half-past two the cashier sent him to the Exchange with a note for Mr. Langley.

After delivering it he determined, at the risk of another run-in with the cashier, to run up to the bank and give in his selling order.

He did so, and the margin clerk assured him that his stock would be sold right away at the market price, which then was 104 1-8.

So when Dick got back to the office he figured up that he would make \$1,500 out of his latest deal, which, with his previous capital, and the \$1,000 he had just received from Mr. Bulwer, would make him worth \$3,250.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE GAMBLING HOUSE.

"This has been a great day for me, Sadie," said Dick to the stenographer as he stopped in at her den when his quitting time had come.

"Has it? What has happened of so much importance?" she asked curiously.

"In the first place, I've made \$2,500."

"You did? Come, now, you're joking."

"Never more serious in my life."

"Why, how could you make so much as that? Surely not out of the market with your little capital."

"I made \$1,500 out of the market on L. & M., which has been booming since morning."

"Oh, that is the new deal you told me about the other day? The one you had a tip about a syndicate that had been formed to corner it."

"That's right."

"You're the luckiest boy in the world to get hold of such a pointer."

"That's straight goods, too."

"You say you made \$1,500 out of it?"

"Nothing surer, girlie. I had 70 shares, which I bought

at 82, and sold at a fraction above 104. I calculate that the fraction will pay most of the commission and interest charges. Twenty-two times seventy is fifteen-forty. Call it \$1,500 even and you have it in a nutshell."

"Well, if you aren't the smartest——"

"Hold on, no bouquets, please!"

"I think you're entitled to a whole conservatory of flowers. Well, how did you acquire the other \$1,000? I think you said you made \$2,500."

"I did, but it's a long story and will have to keep. In a few words it amounts to this: A gentleman lost a pocket-book, I recovered it, and he paid me \$1,000 reward."

"Dick, you must have been born lucky!" cried the girl.

"Surest thing you know, Sadie; but my greatest piece of luck is to come."

"What is that?"

"When I marry you—the sweetest thing by all odds in Wall Street, or anywhere else," chuckled the boy.

"What nonsense!" cried the girl, blushing deeply.

"Nonsense! If you don't take me for your liege lord and master some day I'll go down to the Battery and jump into the bay. Then my ghost shall haunt you as long as you live."

"Is that all you've got to say?"

"No, I've something else. I've made considerable progress toward discovering the mystery of the missing box of bullion."

"You have!"

"I have. If the police knew what I know there would be a sensation in to-morrow morning's papers. But I'm not giving out any information to the police that I can use myself. There are three detectives on the job, I understand. If they're not smart enough to discover who took that box, and how it got out of this office, let them go bag their heads. This kid isn't going to help them."

"You ain't?"

"No."

"So you've discovered——"

"Several things. I know the man who owns the ring whose tail and the impression of the head and neck are in my possession. I know he's a big crook, although he is masquerading as a Wall Street Raffles. I know where his office is, and I believe the missing box of bullion is in his safe, untouched, too, for it would be too risky for him to try to turn it into money yet. I also know that he has a friend—now don't scream out—in this office."

"Why, Dick, you can't mean that!" cried the astonished girl.

"I do mean it. I'm not going to tell you his name yet, for I don't know if this chap is his accomplice or not. It is quite possible that he does not know that this Raffles is a crook, in which case it is merely his misfortune and not his fault that he is acquainted with the rascal."

"How did you find all these things out, Dick? Are you sure that you aren't making a mistake that'll get you into trouble?"

"Don't you worry about me making a mistake, Sadie," replied Dick confidently. "Be sure you're right, then go ahead, said Davy Crockett, and that's my motto. I am right and I'm going right ahead, only I'm working slow to make sure that I don't slip up."



"Well, you're a most extraordinary boy," said Sadie, regarding Dick with admiration.

"No, there's nothing extraordinary about me. I'm just lucky, that's all. Now, remember, not a whisper of what I've told you. You're the only one I'm trusting my secrets to, so I hope you appreciate the honor. Even my folks don't know about my stock speculations."

"You know you can depend on me."

"If I didn't think so you wouldn't have heard a word from me."

"If you find that missing box of bullion you'll be entitled to the reward that Mr. Langley has offered. Then you'd be a rich boy."

"That will suit you first rate, won't it?"

"Why, yes; I'd rather see you get it than anybody else."

"Of course you would. You want your future husband to be well off."

"Run along now, you foolish boy," replied Sadie, turning away with a blushing face.

"So long, then. I'll see you to-morrow."

Two days later Dick received his check from the little bank, and when he looked at his little roll of over \$3,000 he felt that he was something of a capitalist.

He rented a box in a near-by safe deposit vault and placed his money in it.

He knew it would be safe there, and handy to get at when he needed it.

That day he saw Andrew Savage on the street, and he noticed that he had his snake ring on his finger once more.

It was now in perfect condition, and no one to look at it would have supposed it had suffered any mutilation.

Dick wondered what other game Savage was working in the district.

A man of his presumed genius at crooked work would not long remain idle.

Every time the young messenger passed along the corridor and looked at the door of the "National Pneumatic Tire Company," he wondered what his next move would be toward solving the mystery of the missing box of bullion.

Day after day passed, and he was at a standstill.

Several times he was on the point of taking the Wall Street detective, who was still on the case, into his confidence and dividing the honors with him; but he always hesitated, because he was ambitious to work the matter out himself.

He never went home early now, but hung around the corridor to see if anything would happen that would give him the wished-for opening; but nothing did.

He saw Murphy Maguire go into the tire company's office several times, and he also recognized Cole and his associate visit the room.

He never saw anybody else go there—not even Paul Bender, from which he came to the conclusion that Bender was not in with the Savage gang.

In this way three weeks slipped by, and Dick learned of another stock that was being cornered by a pool of big operators.

It was S. & T., and was then ruling at 71.

Dick got his money out of his safe deposit box and bought 300 shares on the usual margin.

"If my usual luck holds out I ought to make a big haul this time," he told himself. "As this is another good tip

I see no reason why I haven't a good chance to win out. At any rate, it's a whole lot better than going it blind."

On the Saturday night following his latest stock deal Dick came down alone to see a popular play at one of the Forty-second Street theatres.

At the close of the show he started for the Sixth Avenue elevated station a few blocks away.

He hadn't gone very far before he saw Andrew Savage, Murphy Maguire and Paul Bender ahead, sauntering along at a leisurely pace.

"Bender is certainly thick with those chaps," thought the boy, as the trio turned into a gilded cafe.

Dick looked in and saw them walk to the end of the bar-room and disappear through a door marked "Private."

The young messenger-sleuth considered a moment and then followed them.

Opening the door, he found himself in a narrow corridor, with a flight of stairs at one side, elegantly carpeted.

He ascended the stairs and came to a door, in white and gilt.

He turned the knob, but the door was fast.

"I guess this is as far as I get," he thought.

Just then two sprucely dressed young men came upstairs.

"Did you ring?" asked one of them.

"No," replied Dick, not knowing what he meant.

The speaker put his finger on an electric push-button, and the tinkle of a bell followed.

A panel in the door slipped noiselessly back, and Dick saw a man's face behind a wire screen.

Presently the door swung open and the two young men entered.

Dick followed after them, close at their heels.

No opposition was made to his entrance.

From the looks of the elegantly furnished corridor along which the young men were walking, taken in connection with the sliding panel, Dick believed that he had been admitted to a gambling resort.

As he didn't doubt but the man on guard believed he accompanied the two young chaps, who were evidently known there, Dick thought it prudent to follow them until out of sight of the guard, who was a strapping colored man, dressed in evening suit.

They went straight to a small room, where they gave their hats and coats to an attendant.

Dick did likewise, receiving a small numbered silver-plated check.

The young men lighted cigarettes and offered Dick one.

He took it, but did not attempt to smoke it beyond taking a puff or two when one of the chaps offered him a light.

When they walked toward a green baize door at the end of the corridor Dick went along with them.

Pushing open the door, which swung both ways at the lightest touch, the three entered a fair-sized, handsomely furnished room.

There was an oblong table in the center, surrounded by a crowd of men, mostly in evening dress.

There was a game going on at the table.

A black-eyed man, with a long, drooping, black mustache, sat at the head of the table, and seemed to be the moving spirit.



"Make your game, gentlemen," Dick heard him say in an impassive tone, "make your game."

There was a movement among those surrounding the table—a part of whom were seated while a second row stood behind their chairs, and also took part in the proceedings.

The smoke from a score of cigars rose lazily into the air and floated ceilingward, and out of the ventilators at the tops of the windows, before which thick shades were tightly drawn.

A hum of low conversation, mingled with an occasional ejaculation, pervaded the apartment.

A roulette wheel stood in a corner in charge of an attendant, and toward this Dick's companions went after a careless glance at the crowd about the long table.

Dick did not follow them, but stood looking with entranced curiosity at the scene around him.

And well he might, for this was his first visit to a gambling house.

## CHAPTER X.

### MORE DISCOVERIES.

No one took any notice of him, but lest one of the attaches might regard him with some suspicion, which might lead to his being summarily ejected, Dick joined the crowd about the table.

He soon saw that Savage, Maguire and Bender had taken a hand in the game.

He watched them furtively and saw that their luck varied.

Nearly an hour passed away, and Dick guessed he was not likely to gain anything by remaining at the gambling house.

He decided to leave.

Starting toward the green baize door, somebody grabbed him by the arm.

Turning, he saw it was one of the young fellows who had unconsciously paved the way for him to get in there.

"Come and have a little refreshment," said the young man, who looked as if he was a member of some swell family.

Dick allowed himself to be led into an adjoining room where there was a sideboard with glasses and cut-glass decanters containing various liquors.

There was also a table covered with a shiny tablecloth on which there was cold meat in plenty, raw oysters, pickled clams, pates, and a dozen other articles of food that looked quite tempting.

A man in a white jacket and cook's cap was in charge, and he handed out whatever a patron of the establishment fancied.

A smooth-faced young man in white jacket served out anything in the drinking line called for.

Everything was free, and you could eat and drink as much or as little as you wanted to.

Boxes of good cigars also stood around, and visitors were expected to help themselves.

Dick's companion called for an oyster pate, and Dick said he'd take one, too.

A roast beef sandwich followed, and then the young fellow asked Dick what he'd drink.

"I'll take a soda," replied the young messenger.

Dick had just finished it when on looking toward the door he was disturbed to see Savage, Maguire and Bender file into the room.

He wouldn't have minded the first two, but he knew Bender would recognize him and want to know how he got in there.

Excusing himself hastily to his companion, Dick hurried to a door that he thought led into the entrance corridor, instead of which it took him into a small, well-lighted passage.

There were numerous doors here, and Dick opened the first he came to.

It led into a small room furnished with a handsome round table and several chairs, with unlighted electric bulbs.

Shutting the door, he was about to try the next when he heard conversation behind it, and that told him the room was occupied.

In fact, the only room that appeared to be unoccupied was the one he had looked into.

Looking back into the refreshment room he saw Savage, Maguire and Bender drinking at the sideboard.

Hoping they would return to the main room, he waited.

Instead of doing that they suddenly came toward the door he was peering through.

"Good gracious! Bender will see me, sure. How can I get out of here?"

Adjoining the room he had looked into was a door, a narrow one which he had overlooked.

As Dick glanced around in perplexity he saw this door. Opening it, he looked in.

He saw it was a closet, containing divers articles, such as brooms, mops, etc.

"I can hide here for a moment or two," he muttered.

He sprang in and shut the door, just as the three men entered the passage.

A moment later he heard them enter the room adjoining.

Savage turned on the electric light, while Maguire closed the door.

A gleam of light shot through a small opening in the connecting wall of the closet.

Dick put his eye to it and saw the three men plainly as they seated themselves around the table.

Their talk also reached his ears quite distinctly.

Savage took a pack of cards out of a receptacle under the table; also a bone or ivory counting-board.

It was clear that the trio were going to indulge in a private game among themselves.

"It's two months now since we copped that box of bullion," said Savage, as he started to deal out the cards, "and as funds are getting a bit low, owing to the losses that Maguire and I have met with in this establishment, I think it is high time that we began thinking of turning those golden ingots into current cash."

At those words Dick's heart gave a great bound.

The scent he was on was getting hot.

Not only that, but he now perceived that Bender was hand-in-glove with the two crooks.

"It's too soon," replied Bender. "Langley has notified



all the assay offices and other places that receive bullion to be on the lookout for the stolen ingots."

"Suppose he has. I propose to get that box away from its present quarters as soon as I can, maybe next week, if circumstances favor it. I've hired a house out in New Jersey where I propose to melt that stuff up into a different shape altogether, and then ship it out West. There we'll have no trouble in disposing of it."

"I don't see how you can get it out of the building without being detected."

"Leave that to me. I'll find a way. I've been figuring on that some time, for I knew it had to be done."

"You can't do it after the building is shut up, and before that there will be the attaches to look out for."

"Don't worry, Bender. I haven't failed in anything I've undertaken yet, and I don't expect to slip up this trip."

"How about the detectives who are on the case? Langley has a special man from the Wall Street agency, and he is continually on the watch around the building. In fact, I heard that he is dressed as an employee."

"I've got him spotted. The other sleuths have been withdrawn."

"Sure of that, are you?"

"Positive. Maguire can tell you that. He's hand-and-glove with several Central Office men, and keeps me posted."

The men then branched off on to other subjects, and Dick continued to listen, hoping they would say something more about their plans concerning the box of bullion, but they didn't.

At length the boy decided that it was useless to remain longer in the closet.

He judged that it was after midnight a good bit by this time.

The cafe was of course closed long since, and he wondered where the exit from the gambling establishment was.

"I don't like to ask my way out, because it would give me away," thought Dick. "I'll have to follow some one on the way out."

Cautiously opening the closet door, he found the passage clear at that moment, and stepping out, went into the refreshment room, where he found several visitors.

Hearing one of them tell his companion that he was going home, Dick followed him to the coat room and got his things at the same time the gentleman did.

Then he fell in behind the man, and the doorkeeper let them both out into the landing at the head of the stairs.

The gentleman went down the stairs and Dick tagged on behind.

The former opened a door that led into the hallway of the building next door.

Through this they gained the street.

Dick looked at his watch and saw that it was a quarter past one.

He lost no time, therefore, in reaching the elevated station and taking a car for home.

## CHAPTER XI.

### KNOCKED OUT.

"I've made two discoveries to-night," he said to himself. "The first is that Paul Bender is in with the Savage crowd, and the second, that the missing box of bullion is

apparently in the office of the National Pneumatic Tire Company's office, locked up, no doubt, in the safe. Now it looks to me as if my next move should be to lay all the facts before Mr. Langley. In that case he'll call in his detective and have him finish the job. That will rob me of half the credit. If it should turn out that the box is not in Savage's safe, but hidden somewhere else in the building, the efforts of the detective may queer the whole business, for the only evidence against these crooks is my unsupported word as matters stand. Though it is true that I can produce the tail of the snake ring, and prove by Tiffany's clerk that the missing tail was replaced by that establishment for Murphy Maguire, acting for Andrew Savage. No, I think I'll wait a while before telling Mr. Langley. Maybe I'll think of some way of finishing the work myself without the aid of the detective."

When Dick reached the office Monday morning he did not confide the fresh facts he had obtained to Sadie.

He figured that matters were nearing a climax, and he would say nothing more until he had brought the job to a successful issue.

When he left the office on Monday afternoon Savage came out of his office, locked up, and went down in the elevator with him.

Savage went toward Broadway, and Dick, being bound in the same direction, followed after him.

The crook crossed Broadway and went up on the other side as far as Cortlandt Street, turning down that thoroughfare.

Dick kept a short distance behind him.

He thought Savage intended to take a Sixth Avenue train uptown.

Instead of mounting the stairs of the station he crossed under it and kept on down the street.

"I wonder where he is going?" thought the young messenger. "I think I will try and find out."

Savage led him to the ferry house at the foot of the street, and there he bought a ferry ticket.

Dick did likewise, and boarded the boat after him.

On reaching Jersey City the crook got on a car, and Dick jumped on the platform of the same one.

After riding some distance Savage got off near the Hackensack River and started up a side street.

Dick followed on the other side of the street.

The houses became fewer and farther apart as they proceeded, and Dick began to fear that the crook would get on to him.

Savage, however, never turned his head, and did not appear to notice that he was being shadowed.

At length he turned a corner leading to the river.

The only house within a hundred yards was the three-story frame one on the corner around which the crook had gone.

It was not tenanted, and fluttering from the front door was part of a "To Let" sign of some real estate agent.

The ground floor was evidently intended to be used as a store.

From the dilapidated appearance of the house it looked as if it had not been occupied for some time.

When Dick reached the opposite corner he expected to see Savage walking on down the street.

He was surprised to find that he was not in sight.



"He must have gone into that building by the small side door, for there is no other place where he could have left the street so quickly," said Dick to himself. "That must be the house he mentioned Saturday night as having taken in New Jersey, and where he is planning to have the missing box of bullion carried to. I must make a note of it."

Dick had never been in that neighborhood before, and he did not know the names of the streets.

Though there was a street lamp on the corner there were no signs on it.

"Never mind; I'll go on to the next house and inquire," he thought.

Acting on this idea he proceeded as far as the nearest building and found out the names of the two streets.

There was nothing for him to do now but to retrace his steps to the car line that had brought him and Savage out there.

When he got as far as the corner opposite the house he had spotted he saw two men standing beside the lamp post.

They were roughly dressed, like laborers, and both wore beards.

"Hello, young man! What time is it?" one of them asked Dick.

The young messenger stopped to give them the information.

As he turned to continue his way he received a blow on the back of the head that stretched him senseless on the ground.

"Quick, Duffy, we must get him across the way and into the building before any one comes along," said one of the bearded men.

They grabbed the boy up between them, bore him across the street, and into the building by the side door.

Savage was waiting for them.

"You've got him. Good!" he ejaculated, looking down at the unconscious lad as he lay on the floor. "This is Langley's messenger, and he followed me from Wall Street clear out here. He never suspected that I was dead on to him. The detective on the missing box of bullion case must have put him on the job, and that is a sign that I am under suspicion. I must return to the city at once, see Bender and get him to find out if the detective really has his eye on me. In the meantime keep this lad a close prisoner in the cellar until you get orders to let him go. I saw him make a note of this building, and he didn't do that for nothing."

"All right, Andy," replied Cole. "We'll see that he doesn't get away until you say the word."

As soon as Savage took his departure the two men carried Dick down to the cellar and tied him securely to one of the foundation supports.

Then they left him and returned upstairs.

It was long after dark when Dick recovered consciousness.

Even had it been broad daylight the boy would have found it dark enough in the cellar.

When he realized that he was bound to a post in some place that appeared to be below the level of the street, his feelings may be better imagined than described.

At that moment he had no suspicion that Savage, or any one connected with him, was responsible for his present unenviable situation.

"I'm in a nice fix," he said to himself. "Those men I

took for workingmen must have been a pair of thugs. They asked me the time to throw me off my guard, and then one of them slugged me with something that was harder than his fist, I should judge from the lump on my head. I dare say they've cleaned me out. Why they took the trouble to bring me to this place, which seems like a cellar, is more than I can understand. After getting all I had I should think they'd have left me in the street and skipped."

After figuring up the situation and not relishing it for a cent, Dick made a desperate effort to free himself.

He found that impossible, as he was too securely bound to the post.

"I wonder if they left me here to perish?" thought the boy, rather dismayed at the idea.

Whether this was the fact or not; a considerable time passed before he heard the slightest sound in the building.

Then what seemed to be the street door slammed, and he heard heavy steps of at least two men walking about over his head.

Thinking these might be persons unaware of his presence in the cellar, he commenced to shout as loud as he could.

The footsteps stopped.

Dick yelled louder, thinking he had attracted their attention.

The footsteps continued, but in a few minutes died away, as if the persons had gone into another room.

"They didn't hear me," muttered the young messenger, much discouraged.

Another hour passed drearily away before he heard the steps again.

Presently he heard a door open at the end of the cellar and heavy steps sounded on the stairs that led down to the place.

A light also shone in that direction.

"Hello, hello!" cried Dick. "Come over this way. I'm tied down here."

He saw a man with a lamp in his hands and another following him, holding something in both his hands.

As they came toward him, Dick, with some consternation, recognized the bearded chaps to whom he felt he owed his present predicament.

## CHAPTER XII.

### CARRIED TO SEA.

"So you've come to your senses, have you?" asked the chap in the lead.

"I have. I'd like to know why I have been made a prisoner and tied down here," replied Dick.

"Don't be impatient to learn too much all at once," chuckled the man. "We've brought you somethin' to eat, which you may take as a sign you're goin' to be a fixture for a day or two and perhaps longer, accordin' to circumstances."

"I don't see any reason why you should want to keep me here. I suppose you have robbed me. What more do you expect to gain?"

"We're not answering any questions, so you might as well hold your gab," replied the man, getting an old box and placing it in front of the boy.



His companion laid a tray on it.

Upon the tray were a couple of meat sandwiches, a piece of cheap pie and a cup of coffee.

The man who had done the talking then released Dick's arms and told him to pitch in.

"Better get busy," said the spokesman, "for you won't get nothin' more till the mornin'."

"I'd like to know——" began Dick.

"I told you that we're not answerin' questions," replied the man sharply. "There's your supper. Eat it. If you won't we'll take it away again and you can go hungry all night."

The man evidently meant what he said, and as Dick was hungry he concluded to eat.

The men stood and watched him till he had cleaned up the dishes, then the fellow who took the lead in the proceedings tied him up again.

After satisfying himself that the boy couldn't free himself he followed his companion, who now carried the lamp.

Their footsteps echoed up the stairs, and then Dick was left in total darkness once more.

"Those rascals have some object in view, that's certain," thought Dick, when alone again. "I'd give a whole lot to know what it is, but I guess I don't find out till the time comes. I wonder where this house is? Why, maybe it's the one on the corner that Savage entered. Gee! I think I see a light. Maybe Savage tumbled to the fact that I was following him and got those two chaps, members of his gang, who were in the house, to nab me. That would account for me being detained here. It's my opinion, too, that those men were the two crooks connected with the robbery of Broker Bulwer's pocketbook. I wonder if they have recognized me as the boy who thwarted them?"

The more Dick thought the matter over the more satisfied he became that he had got on to the true explanation of the facts.

"Looks as if they intended to keep me a prisoner until they have removed the missing box of bullion from its present hiding place. Savage must suspect now that his true character is in danger of being exposed. I guess I made a mistake in following him out here. He probably noticed that I appeared to be following him, and as he has seen me many times in the office building he jumped to the conclusion that he has in some way become an object of suspicion in connection with the missing box of bullion, and that Mr. Langley sent me out to watch him," said Dick to himself.

Only at rare intervals did the young messenger hear footsteps in the house as the hours wore away.

He could form no idea of the time of night it was, but judged that it was late.

He knew that his father and mother would be wondering what had become of him, and, fearing something had happened to him, would long before morning notify the police to look for him.

Finally, in spite of his strenuous circumstances, he fell asleep, and did not wake till the flash of light aroused him.

It was his two captors back again with his breakfast.

"Is it morning?" he asked.

"Yes, it's mornin', all right. Here's your breakfast—a

piece of steak, some fried potatoes, a couple of rolls and coffee. You see we are treatin' you well."

"You'd treat me better by letting me go."

"We can't do that, but we'll do the next best thing, and that is let you have the freedom of the cellar."

Dick made no reply, but ate his breakfast, and then the men retired, leaving him free to move around.

This was a great relief to him, and it put a hope into his head that he might be able to make his escape.

He examined the cellar, with the aid of matchlight, but found that the only exit was through the door that led to the ground floor, and that was either locked or bolted.

At any rate, he couldn't get through it.

About one o'clock dinner was brought to him, and he didn't see the men again until they fetched him his supper.

"The police are surely looking for me by this time," thought Dick, when alone again; "but as I'm away over in the outskirts of Jersey City, near the Hackensack River, they are not likely to come within miles of finding me. I'll bet Mr. Langley has been in a stew without my services to-day, but I can't help that. I am more concerned about the worry my parents are in over my unexplained absence."

Another night passed, and Dick woke up an hour before his breakfast appeared.

He tried to get the men in conversation, but they were not inclined to talk with him.

All the spokesman would say was that he would be set at liberty after a while.

So Dick put in another monotonous day of confinement.

No sooner had he drunk the coffee brought to him with his supper than he began to feel drowsy.

Hardly had the men left him when he fell into a deep sleep, the results of a drug that was in the coffee.

In that condition he was later on removed from the cellar.

The men carried him out on the street and loaded him into a light wagon.

After covering him up carefully, they mounted to the seat and drove away.

When Dick recovered his senses along toward morning he was surprised to find that he was no longer in the cellar but lying in a bunk in a small, low-ceiled and foul-smelling room.

The room seemed to be moving up and down with a rolling motion.

The dull light of early morning was sifting through an opening in the roof.

His ears were saluted with the swish of water against the sides of the room.

When he looked around the place in wonder at the transformation in his surroundings he saw several other bunks in which he noticed rough-looking men snoring away.

In the center of the ceiling hung a lamp, giving out a dim light, but a very strong smell of rancid oil or fat.

"My gracious! Where am I?" Dick asked himself in some consternation.

The answer came to him a moment later—he was aboard some vessel.

With an ejaculation of surprise and dismay he jumped out of the bunk, and rushing to the short ladder leading up to the hole in the ceiling, he ran up it.

Stepping out on the forecastle, he looked around him.



The vessel was under full sail, and nothing greeted his eyes but an unlimited expanse of sea and sky.

The sun was just rising, and the ocean was beginning to sparkle under its beams.

The vessel he was aboard of had three masts, the after one schooner-rigged, showing she was a bark.

"Good Lord! I'm being carried to sea!" cried Dick. "This is an outrage."

He rushed forward to put in a kick.

Seeing the officer of the deck on the poop, he climbed the short ladder and approached him.

"Here, here! Get down and go for'ard!" cried the mate, glaring fiercely at him.

"I want to see you."

"Go for'ard, d'ye hear?"

"I don't belong to this vessel. I'm not a sailor. I'm being carried off against my will. I want you to put me on shore," blurted out Dick.

The mate's reply was to swing his telescope and knock him down.

Two of the watch were then called up and ordered to drag him away and toss him back into the forecabin.

Dick put up the best resistance he knew how, but the sailors were strong and tough, and yanked him along in spite of his struggles.

They shoved him back down the scuttle and warned him to stay there.

He remained several minutes clinging to the ladder in a pretty desperate frame of mind.

He had no idea where the vessel was bound, but he believed it was across the ocean, and the idea of making such a trip as that against his will was maddening to him.

After the two sailors retired Dick crawled up the stairs again and stuck his head out.

There he sat considering what it was possible for him to do.

The longer he considered the more helpless he seemed to be.

At length the sailors were called to breakfast, and Dick moved to another spot on the forecabin.

Here he was spied by the skipper when he came on the poop, and a sailor was sent to bring him aft.

Dick, finding himself in the presence of the captain, asked how he came to be aboard the vessel.

The skipper listened to him, and then ordered the chief mate to bring up the ship's articles and a bottle of ink and a pen.

Dick was ordered to put his autograph down on the document at the end of a list of names.

He refused, whereupon the mate grabbed him, and putting the pen between his fingers, compelled him to make a cross, to which the captain added the words: "John Doe, his mark."

"Now you're shipped, you cantankerous young imp, and if you don't obey orders I'll skin you alive! Take him below, Mr. Butts, and fit him out from the slop chest."

All unnoticed by those aboard, a pilot boat was passing within a biscuit toss of the bark's stern.

She was bowling along under all her sail with a bone in her teeth.

Her number was painted in big black figures on her mainsail.

As the mate started to drag the boy away the young messenger's eyes caught sight of the pilot boat.

Jerking himself from the mate's grasp, he rushed to the rail and sprang overboard with a shout to attract the notice of the men on the small vessel.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### DICK MEETS WITH A SURPRISE.

The eyes of four men on the pilot boat were directed at the bark at the moment Dick took his plunge.

One of them seized a life preserver and flung it in the direction of the boy as he came to the surface.

The captain of the bark ordered the vessel hove to and told the mate to take a boat and pick the lad up.

Before the latter order was more than half executed, Dick had been pulled on board the pilot boat, where, all dripping as he was, he proceeded to explain matters.

As he looked what he claimed to be, a Wall Street messenger, and not a sailor, he was listened to by the head pilot aboard the craft, while the boat lay to a short distance from the bark.

By the time he had finished the chief mate came alongside in his boat.

"Chuck that young deserter in here," he said to one of the pilots.

"Do you claim him as belonging to your crew?" asked the chief pilot.

"I do."

"He says he was put aboard your vessel in a senseless state, and that you were carrying him off against his will."

"He's a liar. He was shipped in regular shape."

"He doesn't look like a sailor. He claims, with considerable show of truth, that he's a Wall Street messenger."

"He can claim what he chooses. His name is attached to the bark's articles and therefore is legally shipped. I demand him back."

The chief pilot was convinced the boy had in some way been shanghai'd, and he refused to force him to return.

"All right," answered the mate in a threatening tone, "we'll take your number, and when we get back we'll have you up before the United States court and make you sweat for this."

"Do it," retorted the pilot. "Look out that the boy doesn't make your skipper sweat for kidnapping him. Now you can sheer off."

With those words the pilot ordered his boat to be put on her course again.

The mate flung a string of imprecations at the pilot, and then ordered his two men to row back to their vessel.

Presently she, too, was put on her course, and the distance widened rapidly between the two vessels.

Dick was taken below and told to strip off his wet clothes.

He was provided with dry ones for the time being and his own garments were wrung out and hung around in the sun to dry.

He was then invited to breakfast in the cabin.

During the meal he told his story more fully, but omitted all reference to the missing box of bullion.



The pilots complimented him on his plucky escape from the bark, and assured him they would land him in New York some time that afternoon.

Sandy Hook was sighted about noon, and Dick was pleased to death to behold the soil of his native land again, although he had only been a short time away from it.

He was landed in the basin at Brooklyn about four o'clock, and soon reached a car that would take him to the Fulton Ferry, where he decided to cross instead of going to the bridge.

It was half-past five when he stepped on Manhattan Island.

Although he knew there was no one at the office at that hour, he determined to go there and telephone home, for there was a telephone in the hallway of the flat he lived in.

He also wanted to find out if any of the Savage crowd were at the National Pneumatic Tire Company's office, in which event he intended to have them arrested at once.

Accordingly he made a bee-line for Wall Street, and found the street almost deserted.

Rushing in at the entrance, he found nobody there but one elevator man, who expressed his surprise on seeing him at that hour.

"Take me up right away, please," he said.

"Step in," said the man.

In the meantime there was something doing at that moment on the fourth floor.

Andrew Savage had made all his arrangements for removing the missing box of bullion from his office.

When the various offices closed at five o'clock, Savage, Maguire, Cole and Duffy were seated in the office of the National Pneumatic Tire Company.

They were joined in the course of a quarter of an hour by Paul Bender.

At half-past five Savage sent Cole and Duffy downstairs to get the head janitor and another attache out of the way for a brief interval.

The detective on the case had been decoyed away on a bogus clue furnished to him by Maguire through one of the Central Office detectives.

A cab was in waiting at the Pine Street entrance, the driver of which was an unscrupulous chap who had agreed to take part in the plot, the nature of which had not been explained to him, for a \$100 bill.

Everything was ready at the moment Dick entered the building.

His presence in the vicinity was the last thing Savage would have calculated on, as he supposed the boy was miles out at sea by that time.

We may as well remark here that Savage was unable to connect Dick with the efforts being made by Broker Langley to recover the missing box of bullion.

Bender had made it his business to look into the matter, and he discovered that Mr. Langley had no idea where his messenger had disappeared to.

Savage, however, regarded the boy's action in following him to the outskirts of Jersey City as too suggestive to be disregarded.

As he wasn't taking any chances, he arranged to have Dick sent to sea simply to get him out of the way.

Everything being in readiness for the quick removal of

the box, Savage opened his safe and he and Maguire took it out.

They were in the act of taking it across the threshold of the door when the janitor's assistant, who was supposed to be in another corridor attending to his business, suddenly appeared.

He uttered an exclamation on seeing the box with the word "bullion" painted on it.

Savage judged from the expression of his face that he suspected something was wrong, and would give the alarm.

He made a spring at the man, while Maguire and Bender dropped the box to help him secure the unwelcome witness.

A short scuffle, and the janitor succumbed to a blow on his head.

"Get the box to the elevator, quick!" cried Savage.

As Bender reached for the box of bullion Dick came into the corridor.

His unlooked-for appearance rather staggered the rascals.

But they were equal to the emergency.

"Seize him, Maguire!" cried Savage.

Maguire slipped behind Dick and grabbed him.

The young messenger was taken by surprise, for he had not counted on seeing what was taking place—the removal of the box of bullion.

Savage rushed to assist his companion in securing the boy.

In half a minute Dick was choked into insensibility.

"Away with the box, you haven't a moment to lose. I'll follow later on," said Savage.

Maguire and Bender raised the box and hurried to the elevator, where a cage, which Cole had brought up to the floor and left there, stood waiting for them.

Savage then dragged both Dick and the janitor's assistant into his office and closed the door.

"How in creation did that boy escape from the vessel he was put aboard of?" he said to himself. "The captain must have gone back on his bargain. Well, his appearance and the inopportune turning up of the janitor will settle me in this building, unless I were to drop them down the elevator shaft, and that kind of business isn't in my line. The boy is the more dangerous of the two. I must get him away if I can. My own cab is at the front door. On the plea that he's ill, if I'm questioned about his condition, I can put him into my cab and take him across the river. As for this man, I'll drag him to the next corridor and leave him on the floor."

This plan the rascal carried out.

After disposing of the janitor's assistant he carried Dick to the elevator and rang the bell.

The elevator came up.

"This young fellow fainted in the corridor near Mr. Langley's office. I'm going to take him around to a doctor's," said Savage to the elevator man.

The attache was unsuspecting and carried Savage and Dick down to the main floor, and at the crook's request helped carry the boy to the cab.

"Cortlandt Street ferry," said Savage to the driver in a low tone.

He got in beside the unconscious boy and the cab drove off.

"Everything is working like a charm," chuckled the crook. "If there had been any trouble getting the box out



by the Pine Street entrance I should have heard about it when I came down. All was then serene, so the box is on its way to New Jersey by this time, and I am close on its heels."

He rubbed his hands together in a satisfied way and chuckled again.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### DICK IN LUCK.

Dick came to his senses to find himself in pitch-darkness and absolute silence.

As his last recollection was struggling with Savage and Murphy Maguire, in the corridor of the fourth floor of the building on Wall Street, he hardly knew what to make of the transformation.

"Where am I at now?" he asked himself.

He felt for his match safe, struck a match and looked around.

"Why, I'm in the same old cellar!" he gasped in astonishment. "Have I been dreaming all I went through since I last looked on this place? It can't be, for it was too realistic. And yet how did I get back here? By George! I don't know what to think. I've been having a truly wonderful experience. I remember eating my supper here and then the next thing I knew I was aboard a vessel and it was morning. After being knocked around by the captain and the mate I jumped overboard and was picked up by a pilot boat which landed me in Brooklyn. Then I went to the office and came upon Savage, Maguire and Bender moving the box of bullion. Savage and Maguire attacked me and then—I find myself back again in this cellar. It seems like a dream; and yet that plunge into the ocean appeared to be real enough. Gosh! If that was a dream I don't want any more like it."

He got up and moved around the cellar, for he was too nervous to remain seated or lying down, as he had found himself.

Finally he walked up the stairs and tried the door.

It was fast, as he expected to find it.

He struck a match and looked up and down the closed edge of it.

There was no lock to the door, therefore he reasoned that it was bolted.

He took out his pocket knife and ran it up the slight slit. About half way up it struck an obstruction.

"That's the bolt," he thought.

Dick soon ascertained that it worked loosely in its fastenings when he pressed against the door.

"Maybe I can work the bolt back," he said to himself.

He lost no time in trying to accomplish the trick.

Little by little the bolt yielded to the force he brought to bear upon it with the blade of the knife.

He paused at intervals to listen, but heard no sound other than the slight scraping sound of his knife blade on the bolt.

Thus he worked steadily for an hour, buoyed up by hope.

At last he worked the end of the bolt clear of the socket and pulled open the door with a thrill of satisfaction and triumph.

He took off his shoes, closed the door and rebolted it, and stepped forward into a room that had a stove in it, and which he naturally reasoned was a kitchen.

There was a window to it, and this afforded Dick a view of the back lot, with a street running on one side of it.

He remembered the lot and the street, and knew where he was.

From the kitchen he passed into a passage which had a door communicating with the street.

The door was locked and doubly bolted.

He shot the bolts, turned the key in the lock, and opened the door.

The sidewalk and freedom were before him.

He was about to take advantage of his good luck when a cab came around the corner at a slow pace.

Dick drew back and closed the door partly, though he never afterward could explain why he did so, for there was nothing in the appearance of the cab to alarm him.

It was fortunate that he did so, for the cab stopped in front of the door.

"Gracious!" he exclaimed, entirely closing the door, relocking it, and shooting one of the bolts. "That must be Savage. Where shall I hide till he gets inside? It would never do for him to discover that I've escaped from the cellar until I'm out of his reach."

As Dick struck a match to look around him, for the kitchen offered no place in which he could remain concealed if a light was introduced there, he saw a door on his left.

Opening it, he saw it was an empty closet.

Just then he heard the side door-bell ring.

He popped into the closet and pulled the door nearly to. A step sounded on the stairway at the end of the passage. Somebody was coming down from above, and this somebody had a light in his hand.

When he was half way down the light of the lamp he carried revealed his features, and to Dick's surprise he saw it was Savage himself.

The crook put the lamp on the floor and went to the door.

Unlocking it, he drew first one bolt and then tried to draw the other, but found it already drawn.

"That's funny," Dick heard him mutter; "I could swear I shot them both. I don't usually do things slipshod. It doesn't pay."

He opened the door and admitted Maguire and Bender carrying a heavy article between them.

Dick's heart gave a jump, for he was sure it was the missing box of bullion.

"It's taken you people a mighty long time to get here," said Savage in an unamiable tone. "I've been here an hour. You ought to have got here about the same time."

"I know it," responded Maguire, "and we would have done so, only we had a breakdown soon after leaving the ferry house, and had to get repairs made before we could continue. It was taking too much risk to change to another cab. We can trust this man, but not a stranger."

Savage accepted Maguire's explanation, and then handed a bunch of bills to the driver of the cab, who stood outside.

He said good-night, mounted his seat and drove away into the darkness the way he had come.

Savage shut the door, and locked and doubly locked it.

"I brought the boy with me," he said.

"What! Dick Hall?" said Bender.



"Yes. I didn't deem it safe to leave him behind, because he spotted this house, and would send the police out here the moment he recovered from the choking Maguire and I gave him."

"So I didn't dream what I went through," thought Dick, as he heard Savage's words. "I thought it was too real for that."

"What are you going to do with him?" asked Bender.

"I've got him locked up in the cellar again," replied Savage. "I'll let him go when the necessity for his detention no longer exists."

"But I'm afraid he saw me in the corridor when he appeared so suddenly upon us. If he did I can't go back to the office, for I'd be arrested in connection with the missing box of bullion, and would go to prison while you chaps escaped with the plunder. You must find out by questioning him in an off-hand way whether he is on to me or not. If I have to dust out I'll throw in my lot with you."

"Leave that to me. If he didn't recognize you you're all right. Now bring the box upstairs."

"Where are Cole and Duffy?" asked Maguire.

"They haven't showed up yet. I expect them to arrive any moment," said Savage, picking up the lamp.

Maguire and Bender each caught up an end of the box and followed the chief crook upstairs.

Dick heard them enter a room and shut the door, and their voices reached his ears but faintly after that.

He stepped out of the closet and stood in the darkness with his shoes in his hand.

"Now what shall I do?" he asked himself. "The missing box of bullion is in one of the rooms above. The moment has arrived when I must round up those rascals. A false move is liable to ruin everything, so I must act with great care. The game is in my hands to close up. Can I do it? I suppose the proper thing for me to do now is to leave the house while the coast is clear and notify the Jersey City police. That will take time. I don't see that I can single-handed accomplish anything by remaining here. I think I've fairly won Mr. Langley's reward if the missing box of bullion is recovered to-night. The detectives have been unable to get any clue to either the box or the thieves, while I have done both. I think I've worked the case up pretty well, and am entitled to all the credit."

Having decided to notify the police, Dick started for the door.

At that moment he heard footsteps on the sidewalk, and in another moment the bell rang.

"That must be Cole and Duffy," thought Dick, retreating to the closet again.

This time it was Maguire who came down with the lamp. He admitted Cole and Duffy.

"Has Andy arrived?" Cole asked.

"He has," replied Maguire. "He's waiting for you. We want a roaring fire started in the stove, for we're going to melt the bullion to-night."

"The sooner the better, I think," answered Cole, "so that we can get away from these diggings."

"We've got news for you, too."

"What news?"

"The boy, young Dick Hall, whom you put aboard the bark 'Santa Maria,' bound for Palermo, is back again."

"Back again!" cried Cole, in an astonished voice.

"Yes. The captain must have let him go somewhere off the coast, for he turned up at the building just as we were taking the box of bullion to the elevator, and we had to knock him out to prevent him giving the alarm and queer-ing the affair."

Cole uttered an imprecation.

"Is he dead?"

"No. Andy brought him out here in a cab."

"Then he's in the cellar?"

"Yes. Andy locked him up there. Come upstairs and get your orders from the boss. We're going to open the box."

The three at once went up to the room above.

## CHAPTER XV.

### CONCLUSION.

"The whole gang is together in the house, and will remain here for some hours. This is my chance to round them up if I can get the police here in anything like a reasonable time," thought Dick, as he came out of the closet.

He went to the door and had unlocked it and partly drawn one of the bolts when the door above opened again, and he heard the voices of Cole and Duffy at the head of the stairs.

Cole had a lighted lamp in his hands.

"They're coming down. I can't go till they're out of the way."

He jumped into the closet again.

"Let's take a look at the boy and see if he's come to his senses," said Cole, when they reached the bottom of the stairs.

Duffy was willing, so they went to the door leading to the cellar, drew the bolt and went down.

"My escape will be discovered. I must skip at once," thought Dick.

Cole and Duffy soon found that Dick was not in the cellar, and they came rushing back in a hurry to notify Savage.

As Dick started for the street door for the fourth time he heard their steps on the stairs, and he was forced to run to cover again.

They shouted up to Savage, and he came to the head of the stairs, followed by Maguire.

"What's wrong?" asked the head crook.

"The boy isn't in the cellar!"

"Isn't in the cellar! He must be," replied Savage.

"I tell you he isn't," returned Cole. "We've just looked."

"He couldn't get out, for I was careful to bolt the door. You found it bolted, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Then he's down there."

"You'd better find him, then," said Cole.

Savage came downstairs and Maguire followed him.

The four, headed by Cole with the lamp, went into the cellar.

As Dick watched them go down a daring idea occurred to him.

It was to secure the four rascals in the cellar and thus make them prisoners.



As for Bender, Dick knew he was a match for Mr. Langley's chief clerk.

Thus, all by himself, he would bag the whole gang and recover the missing box of bullion.

Thrilled by the idea, he ran to the cellar door and shot the bolt.

Then it struck him that they might burst open the door.

He must prevent that if he could.

Running into the kitchen, he looked around for something that would blockade the door.

There was nothing suitable for the purpose.

On a shelf he spied a hammer and a saucer of two-inch wire nails.

He took them down, intending to nail up the door.

With a couple of blows of the hammer he knocked two of the panels out of the door of the kitchen closet.

At that moment he heard the four crooks returning up the cellar steps.

The fellow in the lead must have been astonished when he found the door was bolted.

He shook it and then began to pound and shout.

Dick lost no time in nailing the two panels across the door.

That would hold the four rascals prisoners in spite of everything they could do to get out.

Savage shouted and thumped on the door, demanding to know what was going on, but the young messenger answered him not a word.

Having got the four crooks where he wanted them, Dick started upstairs to settle matters with Paul Bender.

The chief clerk had heard the hammering and other noises downstairs, but supposed it was all right, as he knew the four crooks were down there.

Therefore he was unprepared, when the door of the room opened, to see Dick Hall march in.

"Good-evening, Mr. Bender," said Dick suavely.

The chief clerk gasped and looked quite staggered.

"You—you!" he cried. "I thought——"

"I was a prisoner in the cellar? So I was till I got tired of staying there in the dark and made my way out. As I consider what is good for the goose is also good enough for the gander, I have locked your four friends up in the cellar, where I propose they shall remain until the police take charge of them."

"What!" exclaimed Bender, aghast.

"I see, Mr. Bender, you are taking good care of the missing box of bullion. Do you expect to secure the \$5,000 reward offered by Mr. Langley?" chuckled Dick.

The chief clerk didn't know what to say.

He realized that he was practically in the young messenger's power, for he saw that Dick held a hammer in his hand.

Had Bender been as plucky as the boy he would have put

up a fight at once, but he wasn't, though he was not actually a coward.

"What are you going to do, Dick? Things look bad for me, I'll admit, but you won't give me away, will you? I'll help you get the reward for returning this box and putting the men in the cellar in jail if you don't say that I have had a hand in this affair."

"So you're ready to turn traitor to your friends, eh?"

"They're not friends of mine. They forced me into this thing against my will. I had to stand in with them."

"Well, you can explain all that to Mr. Langley. I have no time to listen to you," replied Dick, walking toward him. "Now put your hands behind your chair."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean to make you my prisoner."

"Oh, I say, I won't stand that, you know!" cried Bender, springing up.

"Sit down, or I'll knock you on the head with this hammer!"

"Come, now, let me go like a good fellow. I'll make it all right with you."

"No, you won't make anything right with me. I've been working on this case from the moment Mr. Langley's safe was found rifled of the box of bullion. Now I have the bunch of you rounded up. Sit down or I'll break your head, do you understand? I'm in no humor to fool with you, and the law will back me up if you make any resistance. If you've got any excuse you'll have to make it to Mr. Langley."

Dick swung the hammer menacingly and Bender threw up the sponge.

He submitted to be bound to the chair with his own handkerchief first, and then Dick completed the job with a rope he found in the room.

The boy then left the room, locked the door and took the key with him.

He lost no time in leaving the house en route to the nearest telephone station he could find.

He traveled ten blocks before he found a drug store.

Here he communicated with the Jersey City Police Headquarters and told the man at the other end enough of the facts of the case to cause him to promise to send a patrol wagon and half a dozen policemen out to the house to take charge of the prisoners and the missing box of bullion.

Dick then rang up Mr. Langley's residence in New York. The broker was in and answered the call himself.

"Is that you, Mr. Langley?" asked Dick.

"Yes. Who are you?"

"Dick Hall."

"What! You, Hall! Where are you, and where in creation have you been keeping yourself for the last four or five



days? Your father and mother are just crazy over your disappearance."

"I'm in Jersey City. Have been held a prisoner by the crooks who stole your box of bullion."

"What! You don't mean that! Who are they?"

"I'll tell you all about it when I see you. But I've great news for you. I have captured the five men of the gang who stole the box, and I've recovered your bullion," replied Dick.

"Impossible!" cried the broker excitedly.

"It's the fact, sir. I've got them in an old house in the suburbs of this town, and the Jersey City police are now on their way out in a patrol wagon to get them and the box of bullion. If you want to learn all the facts as soon as possible, as I guess you do, come right over to police headquarters. By the time you get there the prisoners and the box will be there. I've done what all your detectives could not do—solved the problem of the missing box of bullion. Good-by."

Dick returned at once to the house where his prisoners were, and fifteen minutes later the patrol wagon drove up full of cops.

He was waiting for them outside.

"The prisoners, four of them, are in the cellar," said Dick. "You had better be prepared for a desperate resistance when I let them out, but you can offset that by using your revolvers, for I don't think they're armed. If they are you'll have to take your chances of a shot or two."

Dick, hammer in hand, approached the cellar door, and the police ranged themselves in the best positions to nab the rascals as they appeared.

The boy removed the barricade and shot the bolt.

The crooks heard him and prepared to make a rush.

This they did the moment the door swung open, but they found themselves in the arms of six stalwart officers, who handcuffed them in short order.

It was then a simple matter to secure Bender, and with the missing box of bullion in the wagon the procession returned to headquarters, where Broker Langley had already arrived.

It is needless to say that he was astonished when he found his chief clerk among the prisoners.

All five were locked up to await removal to the Tombs in New York next morning, and Dick accompanied his employer across the river.

On their way uptown in a cab Dick told his story to Mr. Langley, and it is needless to say that the broker was fairly astounded at his messenger's revelation.

"You have fairly won the \$5,000 reward for recovering that box of bullion, Dick," he said. "And the papers will make a hero out of you because you accomplished what the detectives all failed to do. But I am amazed to find that Paul Bender was in this scheme. It must have been through

him they got into my safe; but how he could have mastered the combination is more than I can understand."

Next day Bender confessed how the thing came about.

He said he was in the private room one day when the broker unlocked his safe and overheard Mr. Langley mutter the figures of the combination as he followed them.

He remembered them, and when he got in with Savage, who had taken the office in the building to work another game, he told the crook the combination on the afternoon the box of bullion was put in the safe.

He, Savage and Maguire paid a visit to the office about six o'clock and got away with the box, locking the safe up as it was before.

The chief crook had some trouble with the lock, and that is how he broke off the tail from his snake ring.

The presence of the piece of putty was never explained.

The newspapers had a sensation over the case, and Dick got all the credit he was entitled to.

He also got the \$5,000 reward, and a few days later cleaned up a profit of \$6,000 on his L. & M. deal, which altogether made him worth \$14,000.

From that day he ceased to be a messenger, for Mr. Langley promoted him to his counting-room, and his rise thereafter was fast, and in two years he was filling the shoes of Bender, formerly chief clerk, who, with Savage and the others, was putting in a long sentence at Sing Sing.

Sadie Stevens was very proud over Dick's brilliant achievement, for she had already lost her heart to him; so, when later on he asked her to marry him, she did not say "No."

We will not follow Dick's career any further.

He eventually became Mr. Langley's cashier, and at the same time the husband of the fair stenographer.

The newspapers all gave him a prominent send-off on the occasion of his marriage, because they remembered he was the boy who recovered the Missing Box of Bullion, and Solved the Wall Street Mystery.

THE END.

Read "CLAIM No. 7; OR, A FORTUNE FROM A GOLD MINE," which will be the next number (211) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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## GOOD STORIES.

Catching a monster fish and the line becoming hooked to the boat underneath, where he could not reach it, Felipe Ocampo, of Salina Cruz, Mexico, was dragged out to sea and was missing two days before he could get back. Friends thought that his boat had been swamped.

Walter Fishburn, while ploughing on his farm along the Big Four railroad near Ridgeway, unearthed fifty-six watches, thirty-six gold watch cases, and some small clocks. They were in a trench, but it was impossible to determine how long they had been there. The value of the plunder is estimated at \$500. One of the watches bears the name of F. C. Davis, of Des Moines, Iowa. The others were evidently unused.

The hind legs of some large frogs are eaten, and are much more delicious than the tenderest chicken. They are caught in various ways, and are preserved in large "froggeries" until wanted for the table. In the materia medica the flesh of frogs has long been used by some physicians as the basis for anti-scorbutic and restorative broths. The flesh is most nutritious at the time when they are about to enter their winter quarters, yet great numbers are eaten in the spring, when they are more easily caught.

Two Indian women, known as "Sal" and "Cynthia," members of the camp at Ehrenberg, Ariz., lay claim to the distinction of being the oldest ferry proprietresses on the face of the globe. They are twins, 101 years old, and since the time of the presidency of Andrew Jackson, 1829, have eked out a daily existence pulling the oars of a flat-bottomed, home-made scow on the Colorado River. The legends of the tribe have it that the two women first established the ferry at the request of a chieftain of the Mojaves, the tribe that once ruled on the reaches of the Colorado.

It is reported that the whole of Vancouver Island is now well stocked with pheasants which have long been thoroughly acclimatized and breed freely. The history of pheasant acclimatization in Vancouver is simplicity itself. In 1883 C. W. R. Thompson of Victoria, imported twenty-five birds from China, kept them in captivity till young had been hatched out, and set all at liberty as soon as the chicks were strong enough. In 1886 Mr. Musgrave imported eleven more birds and turned them out, and from these thirty-six pheasants the whole of Vancouver and many of the adjacent islands have been stocked.

A pigeon fancier in Antwerp, Belgium, recently made a unique experiment by means of which he tested the celerity of flight and the power of orientation possessed by a swallow. Several pairs of these birds had nests under the eaves of his house, and without great difficulty he caught one of the swallows and marked it with a splash of red paint for identification. Then he shipped the bird by rail, together with a consignment of homing pigeons that were being trained, to the town of Compiègne in Northern France, a distance of one hundred and forty-seven miles. The morning after their arrival pigeons and swallow were liberated simultaneously at 7.15 o'clock. The homers, following their natural instinct, circled round and round many times before getting their bearings, but the swallow darted away toward the north immediately after its cage was opened. Sixty-seven minutes later the watcher in Antwerp saw the swallow enter its nest, while the first pigeons did not arrive for four hours and seven minutes. The former flew at a rate of nearly one hundred and thirty-two miles an hour, but the speed of the pigeons averaged only slightly more than thirty-five and one-half miles an hour. This latter time is considerably slower than that of which a homer is capable under ordinary conditions, but, granting this fact, the superiority of the swallow is only too evident.

## JOKES AND JESTS.

"Jack is very enthusiastic over the Marathon races, isn't he?" "He's that crazy over them that he won't let me have any vines or roses in the garden that are not runners."

"Old friends are best," said the warm-hearted person. "Humph!" replied Mr. Sirius Barker, who was walking a little lame, "I suppose you're one of these people who would trust a last year's hammock rope."

"It would please me mightily, Miss Stout," said Mr. Mugley, "to have you go to the theater with me this evening." "Have you secured the seats?" asked Miss Vera Stout. "Oh! come now," he protested; "you're not so heavy as all that."

Teacher—Who succeeded Henry VII at the end of the Wars of the Roses? Class—Henry VIII! Teacher—Correct! And who came after Henry VIII? Class—Mary. Teacher—That's right. Now, who came after Mary? Johnny Jones—Mary's lamb.

Mrs. Coonley—How am yo' husband to-day, Mrs. Yallerby? Mrs. Yallerby—I don't exactly know, but de doctoh says he am now convalescent. Mrs. Coonley—Sakes alive! But don't let it worry yo' too much, mah deah, fo' sometimes sick pussons gits dat way jest befo' dey git well.

"All that is the matter with you, sir," said the eminent physician, after a thorough examination, "is lack of nutrition. You don't eat enough." "I eat all I can hold, doctor," said the attenuated caller. "Then you need to have your capacity enlarged, and that's a case for a surgeon. Five dollars, please. Good-morning."

"Have you ever been bankrupt?" asked the counsel. "I have not." "Now, be careful," admonished the lawyer, with raised finger. "Did you ever stop payment?" "Yes." "Ah, I thought we should get at the truth," observed counsel, with an unpleasant smile. "When did this suspension of payment occur?" "When I had paid all I owed," was the pointed reply of the plaintiff.



## A Death Flood

By D. W. Stevens.

Death's Head Brook took its name from the hill which bore the same hideous designation, and I believe the residents of this locality have since given it a less repulsive appellation. The stream ran through a valley between Bushby and the hill.

Billkins was a kind of contractor on the road. He was ready to take a job of almost any kind at which he could make a dollar. He was very sharp and shrewd, and those who knew him best looked out the sharpest for him. While I was an engineer on the road, and before I knew much about him, I had some dealings with him.

He lent me three hundred dollars. It was about the only time in my life I ever borrowed any money. I owned my house free and clear of debt, and it was worth fifteen hundred dollars. This fact made my credit good.

When I bought my place there was a barn on it, for which I had no use whatever. The lot was on a corner, and the barn faced on a side street. I found that by spending three hundred dollars on the building I could make it into a house that would pay me a rent of sixty dollars a year, and a fireman on the road would take the house as soon as it could be made ready.

I borrowed the money of Billkins to do the job. He did not ask any security, and I expected to be able to pay him in the course of a year. But I had some sickness in my family, which prevented me from saving as much money from my wages as I had anticipated.

One night, about a year after this transaction, I found Billkins on the engine when I was ready to start on my morning trip. It was contrary to orders for any one but the regular employees of the road to ride on the engine or tender. The rule was rigidly enforced, and I told Billkins that I could not permit him to remain.

"But I want to talk with you," said he, laughing, as though he considered my opposition of no consequence.

"It is against the rules for any one but the fireman and engineer to ride on the engine," I persisted, "and I can't talk with any one while I am on duty."

"Do you mean to say that I can't ride down to Bushby on this machine?" demanded he with a rather savage expression on his ugly face.

"I only tell you what the rule is, and I am afraid to break it," I added.

"I will keep out of sight, and no one will know that I am on the engine."

"That will be breaking the rules just the same, and I can't do it. I am liable to be discharged if I disregard my orders."

"Oh, bother your orders!"

"That's easy enough for you to say; but I always obey orders."

"McBean, do you mean to insist that I shall not ride on this engine down to my house in the Death's Head Valley?"

"That's what I mean."

"I wanted to talk with you about that money you owe me," said he, scowling at me as though he would like to tear me to pieces.

"I can't talk about it on the engine."

"Do you mean this?"

"Of course I do."

"Then, McBean, I want my money now."

"I haven't three hundred dollars with me, but I will raise the money in a few days and pay you," I replied.

I did not regard the situation as a very serious one, for I knew I could borrow the money by giving a mortgage on my little place. But I was astonished to see a man so unreasonable as Billkins had proved himself to be. It was mean of him to ask me to risk my place on the road to oblige him. The fare to Bushby was a dollar, and I knew that all he wanted was to deadhead it down to the valley and save this sum.

"All right. Think I won't go home to-night," continued my creditor. "I will stay here; and if that note isn't paid before noon to-morrow I will attach all your property."

"That is rather rough on me," I added, not particularly pleased to think of paying the costs of a suit to gratify his malice.

"If a man that I have helped won't do a little thing for me, I will get even with him. My name is Billkins, and I am not the man to be put upon."

With this he jumped out of the cab, and I did not see him again till the next day. When I went through the valley where he lived I couldn't help thinking of what had passed between us. He was a hard man I had learned in the year that had passed since I borrowed the money from him.

Billkins was a widower. He had two grown-up daughters; but he used them so badly that they could not live with him. His house was on the very edge of the railroad in the Death's Head Valley. He had bought the building in Bushby, where it had been put up as the headquarters of the officers of an agricultural fair. It was a frail structure, and he had transported it on a platform car to the land he owned in the valley, setting it on the very line of the road.

When I came to the valley I found that the brook had overflowed its banks, and the region between the ranges of hills was a pond of water. It had been raining incessantly for three days, and the weather was intensely warm for the season, so that the snow in the hills was melting very rapidly. It looked something like a flood, but there appeared to be no danger to the road.

I went through to Bushby without accident. While I was taking on wood and water I met a man of my acquaintance who had money to lend. He was fortunately flush at this time; and was very glad to lend me three hundred dollars on my note alone, and when I started my train I had the money in my pocket to rid myself of the persecution of such a rascal as Billkins. I went on to the end of my trip and then started back. On my return to Bushby I found Billkins there.

While I was waiting at the water station the villain came to the engine. He had been drinking, and he began to abuse me. He renewed his threats and swore he would ruin me if he could. I told him I was ready to pay the debt.

"It will be too late to-morrow," said he savagely.

"Then I will pay it to-night," I replied, taking the money from my pocket. "Give me my note and here is your money."

He seemed to be greatly astonished at my readiness, took out his pocketbook, and produced a paper. He continued to abuse me, as though he was angry because I was ready to pay him. I asked my fireman to look at the money and see that it was all right, and he did so. I gave the roll of bills to Billkins, who counted them by the light of the fireman's lantern, for it was nine o'clock in the evening. He gave me the paper he had taken from his pocketbook.

The signal for starting came then. I put the paper in my pocket and took my place in my chair. Billkins seemed to be in no hurry to get off the engine, and I told him I was going to start. In the end the fireman and myself had to put him out of the cab. I never heard a man swear as he did when we landed him on the ground.

The train went along very well till we came to the Death's Head Valley. I found the water had risen considerably since



I had crossed the bridge the last time. The structure was not the best in the world and I was afraid of it. I stopped the machine and sent the fireman forward to look into the condition of the bridge. He seemed to me to be gone a long time, and I shouted his name several times.

No answer to my call came back, and I called a couple of brakemen to go and look for him. It was intensely dark, and for the last four hours it had been raining with increased violence. The men returned in a short time, saying they could not find the fireman. They reported the bridge as all right.

But what had become of the fireman? We made diligent search, but without obtaining any tidings of him. His body was found three days afterward, more than three miles from the road. I came to the conclusion that he had stepped on a loose plank at the lower side of the bridge and slipped into the rushing water.

A brakeman took his place, and I reached home two hours behind time. I was very sad at the loss of my companion in the cab, for he was a very good fellow. I went to bed without thinking of anything but the calamity that had occurred that day.

When I was dressing myself the next morning I happened to think of the note which Billkins had returned to me. I took it from my pocket in order to tear out my name. To my great astonishment and chagrin it was not the note at all. It was a receipted bill for a dollar and a half for a gallon of whiskey, dated the day before.

Whether Billkins had given me this bill instead of the note intentionally or by accident I had no means of knowing. I had my opinion, however; but it gave me a cold chill when I thought that the only man who had witnessed the transaction of paying the note had disappeared that night. If Billkins held the note he could swear that I had never paid it, and sue me the same as though I had not canceled it.

I was somewhat worried about the matter, and I could not help thinking about it when I went through the valley the next time. I was still afraid of the bridge, and I stopped before I came to it. Billkins was on the road near his house.

"When are you going to pay that note?" said he with a drunken grin, and whether he had intended to give me the note or not, he had learned that he still had it in his possession.

"I paid it last night, Billkins, and you know I did," I replied warmly, for I was very much disturbed by the taunts of the man.

"I have the note, and if you don't pay it, McBean, I'll attach your property the next time I go to your town," he added as I started the machine.

I saw him go into his house as the train crossed the bridge. The weather had been warm and pleasant all day, but after I started on the return the first thunder storm of the season came up, and for two hours the rain poured down in sheets rather than in torrents. When I came to Death's Head Valley I found the water had risen higher than at any time before; but my last examination of the bridge had assured me that no amount of water could move it.

I went ahead at full speed over the valley. Suddenly, and before I came to the bridge, the new fireman shouted that there was something on the track. At this instant the headlight of the locomotive cast its glare upon the object.

It was Billkins' house!

The high water had lifted it from its foundation and carried it to the roadbed. One end of it was sunk down, and the other lifted, so that the corner of the house was half over the track. The irons were under water and the engine was making a fearful swash as it ploughed its way through the tide.

I shut off the steam and whistled for the brakes; but I might as well have whistled myself, so far as accomplishing anything was concerned. The intense darkness and the mists of the heavy rain had obstructed our vision till we were almost on the house. Even the headlight was good for no more than half its usual distance.

The engine struck the house, but the machine was not even thrown from the track by the collision. The flimsy structure was shattered into a thousand pieces. It went over into the deep water in fragments, all in a heap.

I stopped the train as soon as possible. Fifty men who had felt the shock got into the water to look for the remains of the house. Only a few fragments remained of it. The water swept the boards and timbers away. I could hardly have conceived of a ruin more complete.

Two days later the body of Billkins was found near that of the fireman. He was in his nightclothes. There were bad bruises on his remains, and I learned that his bed had been in the corner struck by the locomotive. He was doubtless sleeping off one of his debauches on the whiskey the bill for which came into my possession. He could not have known what hurt him.

None of his effects were ever found. If my note was still in his pocketbook, the mad waters had destroyed it, or buried it in the rubbish that was moved by the death flood.

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The largest electrically-controlled switch tower in the world has just been put into service at Providence, R. I., on the New York, New Haven & Hartford Railroad. The tower is equipped with 77 switch levers, providing 266 combinations. Elaborate precautions are furnished to prevent the giving of a wrong signal. The power used is taken from the feed wires of the railway, but as a precaution two other sources of power are provided, which may be drawn upon in case of emergency.

A lake of quicksilver, covering an area of more than three acres, and having a depth ranging from ten feet to fifty feet, has been discovered in the mountains of the State of Vera Cruz, Mexico. The value of the product is estimated at millions. This lake has been known to the Indians for many generations. It is situated far up in the mountains in an almost inaccessible position. Its surface is partly covered by stones. It is believed that volcanic action in the mountains above smelted the quicksilver out of the cinnabar ore, and that it ran down and filled this depression. A tunnel will be driven through the base of the mountain, and the quicksilver will be brought down by means of gravity.

A large cheetah, evidently from the jungles near Malapuram, India, descended recently on the village of Tirur and caused a panic among the village folk. Entering a Molpah hut, the beast pounced upon a woman, killing her and then eating away a portion of the face and body. The poor woman screamed for several minutes, but the terrified neighbors could not find sufficient courage to go the rescue, and on the cheetah emerging there was a general stampede. The brute went out, savagely attacking all it came across, and some thirteen persons were severely mauled, four of them succumbing to their injuries. Eventually the cheetah concealed itself in a pit, where it was followed by a railway inspector, who shot it. The first shot did not tell, and the cheetah sprang on Mr. Noronha, the official, who managed to evade it. A coolie and Molpah villager going to the rescue were attacked, the villager being dragged down by the cheetah. Mr. Noronha then shot the beast through the heart. When the villagers found that it was dead they rushed up and belabored the carcass with stones and any weapons they could pick up.



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